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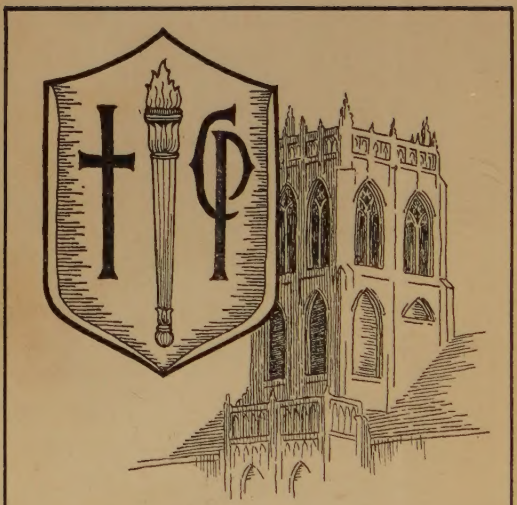
# THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

SHAILER MATHEWS



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ORIGINAL IN THE ART COLLECTION OF BOWDOIN COLLEGE

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# PREFACE

For the student of society, the few years that elapsed between the assembling of the States General and the appearance of Napoleon Bonaparte afford material altogether unequaled for a study in social psychology. Few indeed were the political theories and proposals for social amelioration that were not then tried. Nor dares one say that these attempts of philosophers so desperately in earnest to bring in liberty and equality were altogether futile. Because of the constructive genius of Napoleon, they had lasting and, in the main, beneficial results. But there were few of the reform movements then inaugurated that were given anything like normal conditions for trial. Revolutions are not the best means by which to bring about permanent reforms, any more than fevers are the best means of bringing about improvement in one's health; but they are not pathological. No decaying people has vitality enough to carry through a revolt to such constitutional changes as make it worthy the name of revolution. In France, just as in America a few years before, and in England in the preceding century, revolution was the outcome of national convalescence, of a socialized conviction of injustice, and of a universal determination to install justice. It was

the expression of popular hatred with abuses—political, social, ecclesiastical, economic—which, if properly met and controlled, might have been turned into the more quiet ways of reform. Nor was it a product of Paris alone. It was the work of a great nation, provinces as well as capital, and to appreciate its significance, the student must never confuse temporary mob rule with a national awakening.

It is this need of studying the spirit of the French people quite as much as their deeds, that has led to what may appear, in a book of this size, a somewhat disproportionately extended treatment of the pre-revolutionary condition of France. But the change of temper which made the Old Régime unendurable and compelled Louis to summon the State General, was by far the most important element of the Revolution. One might properly call it the Revolution itself, so completely were the years of violence under the Convention the outcome of the attempt to preserve advantages the Constituent Assembly had gained. To understand the conditions which were outgrown and the origin and growth of the revolutionary spirit, seems, therefore, quite as necessary as to trace the history of the destruction of abuse and the struggle for liberty and rights.

While novelties in historical matter are always to be suspected, it cannot be denied that the light thrown upon the French Revolution by recent investigators compels a revision of some of the judgments of the past. Especially is this true of leading revo-

lutionists like Danton and Robespierre, and quite as much so of the nature of the Terror. As the present volume is intended for the general reader, I have not judged it necessary to give specific authorities for some of the restatements which have appeared necessary, but have contented myself with giving references to the chief authorities and sources at important points. In addition, general references to English historical literature have been given for the benefit of those who, though not special students, may care to read somewhat widely.

The inadequacy of any brief history of the Revolution can be felt by no one more than by its author, and it is almost unfriendly to involve others in one's own shortcomings, but I cannot refrain from expressing my thanks to Dr. J. W. Fertig, of the Lewis Institute, Chicago, and Dr. W. K. Clement, who have read the proofs of the book, and to Professor A. W. Small, of the University of Chicago, for many helpful suggestions. But for them this attempt at reworking college lectures would have been even more marked by errors than, I fear, it is now. Thanks are also due to Professor G. T. Little, of Bowdoin College, for the reproduction of the portrait of Mirabeau, the original of which was discovered in Paris by James Bowdoin, and is now in the art collection of Bowdoin College. My indebtedness to the works of Von Sybel, Aulard, Sorel, and H. Morse Stephens will appear on every page.

SHAILER MATHEWS.

The University of Chicago, July 16, 1900.

# THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

## PART I

## FRANCE AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE REVOLUTION

### CHAPTER I

#### THE ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

I. The Absolute Monarchy in France: 1. Its Rise through the Centralization of Feudal France; 2. The Councils, Parlements, and the King; 3. The Provincial Administration, (*a*) the Provinces, (*b*) the Intendances, (*c*) the Intendants. II. The Extent of Centralization. III. The Capital and the Nation. IV. The Decay of Governmental Efficiency.

When Louis XVI. came to the throne of France, May 10, 1774, it was universally believed that the clumsy, conscientious, stupid young man and his beautiful wife were to introduce a period of national prosperity such as France had not known since the earlier days of Louis XIV. In part these hopes were realized, for the nation was more prosperous under Louis XVI. than under Louis XV., or, indeed, than it had been during the last third of the long reign of Louis XIV. That they were not more fully realized, and that within fifteen years radical reform of every sort was

demanded for the very existence of France, was due to the structure of French society and the organization of the French state; perhaps as much as anything, to the irresponsible monarchy which the young king inherited.

To understand the French monarchy, one needs to begin one's study at the time that Louis XI. broke the military power of the nobles by his defeat of Charles the Bold. From that time the royal power grew rapidly. The Reformation, it is true, increased the political influence of the nobles, and for a time it looked as if there might be two states in France, one Protestant and the other Catholic. But Henry IV., and after him Richelieu and Mazarin, annihilated the power of the nobility, and built upon its ruins an absolute monarchy. Although France remained broken up into great feudal estates, their lords had grown so subservient as to have become what Carlyle contemptuously calls them, "gilt pasteboard caryatids of the throne." By the seventeenth century France had become the one strongly centralized—it would almost be possible to say, the one modern—state in Europe. It was, in fact, the political marvel of the day. It alone of all the European powers had emerged more resplendent from the awful century and a half succeeding the Protestant movement in Germany. It was not only leader in thought, in art, in manners; it was practically dictator in European politics. The Peace of Westphalia, which in 1648 brought to a close the Thirty Years' War, was to all intents and purposes a French document, announcing that Louis XIV. proposed to control the policy of every continental

state. It is true such pretensions could not and did not long endure, and after the victories of William of Orange, the Duke of Marlborough, and Prince Eugene, and even after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), the Grand Monarch's influence had waned in international affairs. But so thoroughly had the work of Richelieu and Mazarin been done that the monarchy itself was no loser by national misfortune. It even grew the more absolute, and France the more unified. And this in the very century in which Germany had barely missed committing suicide in the Thirty Years' War, and England had been rent in twain by Roundhead and Cavalier! The records of the time show clearly enough that the French monarchy was the envy of European kings. And well it might have been in the eyes of a ruler like Charles I. of England. "*L'état, c'est moi*—The state? 'Tis I!"—is the definition legend makes Louis XIV.[1] give of France, and there is no more symbolical picture than that of the young "Sun King" as with the equivalent of these words on his lips he walked into the meeting of the Parlement of Paris, and, with riding-boots on his feet and riding-whip in his hand, addressed the kneeling commoners. The regency of Orleans and the reign of Louis XV., though fatal to the morals of the court, none the less increased the absolutism of the king. As all power belonged to the monarch, so all property. Montesquieu saw in monarchy a despotism limited only by the sale of public offices. Blackstone, writing in the eighteenth century, classes France

[1] Louis did not use these words, but made a short speech to the same effect. See Fournier, *L'Esprit dans l'Histoire.*

with Turkey. The Sorbonne, the great theological court of the nation, said that all the property of his subjects belonged to the king, and that in taking it he took simply what was his own. The one remaining check upon his action, the High Court of Paris (*Parlement de Paris*), was suppressed during the last years of Louis XV., and replaced by a most unpopular new court, named after the minister who brought it into existence, the Court (*Parlement*) of Maupeou. Of anything resembling a representative legislative body for the entire nation there was no trace for the one hundred and seventy-five years preceding 1789.[1] The legislative, like the administrative power, was centered in the king. The legal phrase summed up the whole matter, "As the king wills, so the law wills."

As far as the machinery of this absolutism was concerned, the king might in person care for the affairs of state, or, if like Louis XV. he was disinclined to such exertion, the state was managed by ministers and councils, while the master of them all enjoyed himself as he saw fit.[2] These councils had legally the right neither of initiation nor of decision, but were advisory. The king, if he chose, could decide all matters without reference to them, or dismiss them outright if he preferred. Yet in actual practice this seldom happened, and practically all laws were made

[1] But it should be noted that provincial assemblies continued to meet and preserve, however imperfectly, the thought of representation.

[2] There were five of these councils of state: Dispatches, Finance, Commerce, and, less important, the Privy Council. Each of the first four had never more than nine members, while the Privy Council numbered 100-150. The king was supposedly a member of them all, but usually attended only the three first named.

by them, although no law was supposed to be finally binding until it had been registered by the Parlement of Paris—that is, had been formally approved and entered on the records of the state.

The administrative division of France was cumbersome. There were, in fact, three general strata of administrative units. There was first, the ecclesiastic, which concerned the Roman Church alone. Second, there were the provinces. These were the remains of originally independent kingdoms or duchies which had been gradually united into the nation, and by the time of Louis XVI. had become merely military districts under governors, whose office, except in actual revolt, had become practically sinecures. The provinces numbered thirty-two (or thirty-three if Corsica be included), and were of two classes, those of the *Pays d'Election* and those of the *Pays d'Etat.* The difference between these two classes of provinces was this: the provinces belonging to the *Pays d'Etat* had been more recently conquered or acquired than those of the *Pays d'Election*, and had preserved the privilege of holding provincial assemblies. The assemblies were composed of members of the three estates, clergy, nobles, commons, and enjoyed the right of consenting to taxation, and in other ways preserved something of self-government.[1] The *Pays d'Election*, on the other hand, comprised the central provinces of France, and possessed no trace of that self-government which, as their name indicates, had been theirs

[1] There were seventeen such provinces in 1789, the most important of which were Brittany, Flanders, Burgundy, Artois, Languedoc, Provence, Dauphiné.

until 1614. It was these provinces that especially felt the effects of maladministration.

A third division of France may be said to have dated from the time of Richelieu, and was wholly for purposes of civil administration, especially for the purpose of taxation. It consisted of thirty-five[1] *généralités* or intendances, at the head of each of which was an intendant. They coincided approximately with the provinces, and were subdivided into subordinate districts bearing a variety of names.[2]

It was this fiscal division of France that furnished the points of contact between the monarch and his people. The intendant was a member of the Privy Council, and was thus, like the Council itself, an extension of the royal will. As John Law said, these intendants constituted the "thirty tyrants" of France. Thanks to the power delegated them by the Council, they were supreme in their districts, levying taxes, making laws, and in case appeal was taken from any of their decisions, actually judging these appeals. Was rejoicing in order? The intendant ordered bonfirs; mourning? crêpe. Did a town guard fail to attend the Te Deum? They were forthwith fined twenty francs a man. If the peasant brought an ox to market, the inspector of cattle presented himself; the inspector of calves looked after the calves; the inspector of swine took care of the pigs, and if it happened to be a sow with young, he was joined by

[1] Thirty-one according to the report of Necker in 1784, but for various reasons he omits four.

[2] In the *Pays d'Election* these were generally known as *élections* or *gouvernements;* in the *Pays d'Etat*, as *diocèses*, *bailliages*, *élections*, etc. On this entire matter, see Boiteau, *Etat de la France en 1789*, chs. 3, 4.

the inspector of sucking pigs.[1] The intendants themselves mostly remained in Paris or Versailles, and the actual oversight of their districts was in the hands of his sub-delegates. These latter officials are described in the great protest presented by the *Cour des Aides* to Louis XVI. in 1775,[2] as men without rank and without legal authority, against whose petty tyranny the inhabitants of a village dared not defend themselves. It is indeed easy to see how an absentee official, even if he had the best intentions, might lend himself unwittingly to all the abuses attending too great reliance upon a practically independent subordinate. Yet, on the other hand, the possibility for reform that lay in the hands of a conscientious resident intendant is to be seen in the enormous improvements accomplished by Turgot during the twelve years of his administration of Limoges.

So complete was this centralization of power and administration that the government at Versailles, through the councils and intendants, cared for matters that, according to modern political ideas, might much better have been left to local magistrates and boards. Indeed, nothing within the entire range of life was too great or too small to be overlooked by the ubiquitous representative of royalty. We should expect that the taxes would be levied by the Royal Council, and in the light of other facts it is not suprising to discover that there was no national as distinct from the king's personal treasury.[3] But even a mod-

[1] Von Holst, *French Revolution*, I, 14.

[2] This highly important document for the study of the Old Régime has been published, with a translation, in *Translations and Reprints*, V, 2. (University of Pennsylvania, Dept. of Hist.)

[3] The proposal in 1788 to make such a distinction was revolutionary.

ern Frenchman, accustomed to a republic that is more bureaucratic than some monarchies, could not imagine his government assuming such paternal functions as the Bourbon king. By means of *lettres de cachet*, or royal orders for arrest, obtained easily by the nobility, and which sometimes were even signed when blank, he could imprison any person without trial. By them he even could interfere in family life, helping a despairing father discipline his unmanageable son. In agriculture, the Royal Council advised what crops should be planted, seasoning the energetic enforcement of their advice with much good counsel. In towns and parishes the central government was supreme. "There was no city, town, borough, village, or hamlet in the kingdom; there was neither hospital, church fabric, or religious house which could have an independent will in the management of its private affairs, or which could administer its own property after its own plans."[1]

Wits saw no limit to this absolutism. When in 1732 the government found it advisable to close up the St. Médard Cemetery in Paris because of the disorders arising from the miracles alleged to have been wrought at a Jansenist's grave, the following notice was found one morning on the closed gates: "By order of the king. God is hereby forbidden to work miracles in this place." Just how the ignorant masses thought of this power we can well imagine. It would be impossible to convince them that this all-powerful ruler was not answerable for their misfortunes and miseries.

[1] De Tocqueville, *The Old Régime*, 64.

The centralization of France in Paris was at once the explanation and the result of this condition of affairs.[1] In the eighteenth century Paris was rapidly becoming France. The old nobility, who formerly had lived scattered throughout the provinces, after one desperate attempt to regain the power Richelieu had wrested from them, had flocked to the royal court at Versailles, there to make their fortunes. But not only the nobility sought the capital; trade more and more turned thither. In the sixteenth century, for instance, the provinces had many important book publishers; in the eighteenth century they had practically none; all were in Paris. Arthur Young, a thoroughly intelligent Englishman, traveling through some of the smaller cities at the outbreak of the Revolution, asked some of the leading men what they would do. "Oh," said they, "we don't know; we are only small provincial towns; we will wait till we see what Paris will do." It is true that the Revolution was an affair of the provincials quite as much as of the Parisians—perhaps in some ways even more so, for few of its leaders were from the capital; but without this centralization of authority and national life the problem of reform would have been far easier, and one is inclined to believe, the desperation of theorists like Robespierre and the brutality of men like Hébert would have been short-lived, if indeed possible. As it was, although the Revolution was quite as much the

[1] Such a statement is intended to be only general. The political relation of Paris to France was really threefold: (1) It was the capital; (2) it was one of the "royal cities" (*bonnes villes*); (3) it was a self-governing municipality. It was characteristic of the political condition of France that Paris had institutions appropriate to each of these characters. See Monin, *L'Etat de Paris en 1789*, 29.

work of the provinces as of the capital, the control of Paris proved to be the control of the state.

But nothwithstanding—or better, perhaps, because of this elaborate organization—the government of France by the middle of the eighteenth century had become thoroughly inefficient. The feudal survivals in the provinces, the utter injustice of allowing the *Pays d'Etat* elements of self-government not enjoyed by the *Pays d'Election*, the impossibility of administering municipal affairs equitably or effectively from Versailles, all combined to cripple the government. The weakness of the administration was increased by the neglect paid by Louis XV. to affairs of state. "The old machine will last through my days," he said, and went about his pleasures. Evidences of the inability of the monarchy to govern are numerous throughout the quarter-century preceding the Revolution. It is not merely that the state possessed a debt of hundreds of millions, that taxes were spent long before they were collected, that a deficit grew annually, that legislation was imbecile in its treatment of the most important economic matters. The country was really drifting to ruin. Cynical old Louis XV. saw it—or if not he, the Pompadour—and all too truly prophesied that after him would be the deluge. Chesterfield and Rousseau saw it. Indeed, the evidence was only too abundant. There being no popular representation, there were no popular leaders. The very "ward-heeler," with his "gang," is to-day, by some strange paradox of American politics, a guarantee that government by the people shall not perish from the earth; but even he was lacking in monarchical France. Government could not maintain order. The artisans had

grown so accustomed to thinking of the state as a mere taxing organization that they were suspicious even of the call for representative assemblies in 1787. Smugglers were innumerable, despite fearful penalties; and under desperate leaders like Mandrin in 1754, or Hulin in 1782, sometimes waged miniature civil war. "Brigands" in bands ranged over the country, intimidating, robbing, even murdering, well-to-do peasants. Police protection was insufficient. In 1764 the government made a desperate effort to check the evil, and fifty thousand vagabonds are said to have been arrested in one year; but the evil persisted. An ordinance of 1778 provided that the police should arrest, not only beggars and vagabonds whom they encountered, but also those denounced as such or as suspected persons. This law reads as if it were intended to be the model of that against "suspects" passed by the Terrorists; but it did not accomplish its end. The "brigands" increased, and became an ever-increasing source of terror.

In one word, the government of France was senile. From without, it could only coerce; and brilliant as was the court at Versailles, long before the Revolution the monarchy had lost its ability to fulfill either old or new functions. For France, a magnificent nation of more than twenty-five millions, had outgrown absolutism, and was growing spiritually ambitious, stronger, and restless. The problem grew more fatally simple with every year, until at last it might be said to have become this: Would the government recognize this new France, and if so, had the monarchy sufficient vitality to endure the rejuvenation of reform?

# CHAPTER II

## THE PRIVILEGED AND THE UNPRIVILEGED

I. The Classes of the Privileged. II. Taxation: 1. Exemptions; 2. The Case of the Peasants; 3. The Indirect Taxes. III. Sinecures and Pensions for the Nobles. IV. Feudal Privileges: 1. Feudal Dues; 2. Hunting; 3. Absentee Lords; 4. The Increase of the Nobility. V. The Third Estate: 1. Classes; 2. The *Bourgeoisie* as Compared with the Peasants; 3. Rise of *Bourgeoisie* in importance; 4. Hatred of *Bourgeoisie* on the Part of the Peasants and Artisans. VI. The Army: 1. The Militia; 2. The Regular Army: (*a*) The Common Soldier, (*b*) The Officers, (*c*) The Army as a Type of the Nation.

The Old Régime was essentially characterized by civil and social inequality. In this it was the outcome of feudalism. The centralization of all political power in the hands of the king had not been accompanied by the abolition of privileges with roots running back into the earliest years of the nation's life. The great houses of the Second Estate, or nobility, perpetuated rights that recalled the times when their founders had been absolute masters of their villeins' life and limb; while the new houses, like all upstarts, saw in their lack of antiquity a reason for insisting the more arrogantly upon privilege and exemption. As one looks back across the Revolution upon these social inequalities and hoary abuses, it is easy to see that they, and not monarchy, were the first objects of popular hatred, and to appreciate the fact often to be emphasized that the Revolution was fundamentally social rather

than political. It was not primarily a revolt against absolutism, for to this day the French have had no government that in some way has not perpetuated Bourbon centralization. It was an uprising against privilege.

Speaking for the moment very loosely, under the Old Régime Frenchmen were divided into two classes, those with privileges and those without privileges. To the former belonged the First Estate, or the clergy, the Second Estate, or the nobility, and the wealthy commoners. To the class of the unprivileged belonged all the rest of France.

Postponing for the present the consideration of the clergy, we must consider the nobility. By the end of Louis XV.'s reign, nearly every man who was not actually an artisan, a farmer, a shopkeeper, or a small lawyer was a noble. They numbered perhaps one hundred thousand persons, and owned a fifth of the soil. The number of those who actually owned estates, however, was much smaller, but in so far as this fact did not make exceptions necessary, they all enjoyed essentially the same privileges. It has been estimated that there were thirty-five thousand castles or châteaux in France owned by the nobility. The lower nobles, on the whole, contributed an element of strength to the nation. Living on their small estates, they felt the responsibilities of their position, and cared somewhat conscientiously for their peasants. Their sons were likely to be dissipated in early life, but when heads of families of their own, generally reformed. Their daughters were as well educated as conventionality permitted, and either married young

or went into convents. One other feature of the life of these small nobles was of great influence upon the national life. As estates were divided among the children, the tendency toward a landless aristocracy was very strong. The result of this was twofold: On the one hand, many of these poor nobles grew all the more strenuous supporters of the privileges of their caste, while on the other hand, some of them, like Mirabeau, cast in their lot with the commoners, and were among the most implacable enemies of the privileges to which their fathers had clung. As a class, however, the *noblesse* merited the words of Chateaubriand: "Aristocracy has three stages: first, the age of force, from which it degenerates into the age of privilege, and is finally extinguished in the age of vanity."

The chief privilege enjoyed alike by the nobility, the clergy, and the wealthier commoners was that of exemption from taxation. It is true that the clergy, perhaps in return for some legislation hostile to Protestantism, perhaps under stress of war, perhaps from a sense of duty, did occasionally vote a gift to the state, but this was in the place of, not in addition to, taxes. Even thus it steadily lessened. Originally but $600,000 a year, in 1788 it shrank to $360,000, and in 1789 was refused altogether.[1] Had the church really paid in anything like a proportion to its wealth, the annual levy would have been vastly greater. The

[1] In this and other estimates the livre is reckoned as a franc. As a matter of fact, from 1774 to 1789 the livre possessed value as silver of 0 fr. 98 cent. But its purchasing power was considerably greater. In 1830 the livre of 1789 had the purchasing power of 1 fr. 40 cent. and to-day it is considerably greater. If all sums are multiplied by three, the probability is that their present purchasing power will be approximately discovered. Cf. Boiteau, *L'Etat de la France en 1789*, 417.

church raised $36,600,000 itself as tithes, and its taxable property should certainly have yielded the state an equal sum.[1] Even when the church made its gifts, however, it received a grant from the royal treasury larger than the gift it had made! In 1787 it received $300,000 more than it gave. In one province $360,000 were spent in the public service, but the two upper classes contributed nothing to it. In ten other provinces $2,000,000 was paid by the lower classes as an income tax; the two upper orders paid about $400,000. The princes of the blood paid $36,000, when they should have paid $500,000. In fact, it came to be held that to pay taxes was a disgrace—an evidence of plebeian origin, and corruption of the intendants and their officials was open. Even when the nobility paid taxes, they were clamorous for pensions from the court, and seldom were they absolutely refused.

Over against this scandalous exemption place the condition of the peasant. The direct taxes—chief of which were the land tax (*taille*), poll tax (*capitation*), and, most hated of all, the *corvée*, or forced labor on public works—amounted to fifty-three per cent of the net produce of his farm; and this was in addition to the tithes paid the church and the feudal dues paid his seigneur, each of which amounted to fourteen per cent more. Altogether the peasant paid thus eighty-one per cent of his supposed income in some form of taxes. So Taine, at least, calculates.[2] And even if, as it may very probably be, this is an overstatement,

[1] Boiteau, *Etat de la France en 1789*, 214, says the church paid to the state from 1706 to 1789 295,000,000 livres, when it should have paid 2,376,000,000.

[2] *Ancient Régime*, 412.

when made to apply to France as a whole rather than to exceptionally unfortunate provinces, there can be little doubt that the taxes were a serious hindrance to agricultural France. At the best, they put a premium upon letting one's visible property go to ruin lest it attract the attention of the tax-collector. Peasants actually requested their lord not to repair their cottages, on the ground that to replace thatch with tiles would lead the sub-delegate to increase their tax.

Yet the amount of tax collected from France was not so great that, had it been equitably levied, it should have produced the least misery. Here the utter inefficiency of the state is apparent. The taxes were levied by the Council through the intendant, who "could exempt, change, add, or diminish at pleasure. It must be obvious that the friends, acquaintances, and dependents of the intendant, and of all his *sub-delegués* and the friends of these friends to a long chain of dependencies, might be favored in taxation at the expense of their miserable neighbors."[1] The very method of collecting taxes increased the oppression. Each parish, much against its will, had to collect its own share, and its collectors were held personally responsible for the taxes set them to collect! "The service," said Turgot, "is the despair and almost always the ruin of those obliged to perform it."

The indirect taxes were generally farmed out to speculators—the *fermiers généraux*—who made them a source of private profit. This in itself would be fatal to good administration, but such taxes were col-

[1] Arthur Young, *Travels in France* (Bohn ed.), 314.

lected only with the aid of atrocious legislation. There was the *gabelle*, or salt tax, for instance, by far the most burdensome. Every head of a family was compelled to purchase annually, and at a price set by the government, seven pounds of salt for every person of his family above seven years of age. Whether he needed it or not made no difference. If he neglected to purchase the salt, he was fined. Two sisters once needed salt on Tuesday. The government depot did not open until Saturday. They boiled down some brine—and paid a fine of forty-eight francs, and were fortunate to get off with that! If a man had any salt left over at the end of a year, and so refused to purchase, he was fined as well. If he smuggled salt or bought it where he could buy it at a lower price, he was punished terribly. A smuggler, unarmed, with horses and carts, was fined three hundred francs, or sent three years to the galleys. His second offense brought him, in one part of France, a fine of four hundred francs or nine years in the galleys; in another part, the second offense sent him to the galleys for life. Children and women who smuggled salt were fined for the first offense one hundred francs; for the second offense, three hundred francs; for the third offense, they were flogged and banished the kingdom for life.[1] And these laws were enforced. Calonne, one of the last ministers of Louis XVI., declared that the salt tax was the cause every year of "four thousand attachments on houses, thirty-four hundred imprisonments, five hundred condemnations to the whipping-post, banishment, or galleys."

[1] See full details in Arthur Young, *Travels in France* (Bohn ed.), 315, 316.

In addition there were the *octroi*, or tax on food brought into any town, and the taxes on wine and cider, as well as on imports and exports, both at the frontiers and at the boundaries of different provinces. When one further recalls that salt, grain, and other necessaries of life were in the hands of great monopolies formed under royal charters, and that in the notorious *Pacte de Famine*, a grain "corner" of the most conscienceless sort, Louis XV. was himself supposed to have been interested, it is no wonder that the peasants should have come to regard tax-collectors, feudal lords, clergy, and corporations as their natural enemies.

But while thus the miserably poor peasantry paid and the wealthy classes were largely free from taxes, the inequality was intensified by the fact that sinecures with large salaries were enjoyed by those having influence at court. Madame Lamballe, for instance, was given $30,000 a year for acting as superintendent of the queen's household. Persons were appointed to offices the very duties of which had been forgotten. One young man was given a salary of $3,600 for an office whose sole duty consisted in his signing his name twice a year. In 1780, after Louis XVI. had inaugurated retrenchment, the three old maid aunts of the king were allowed $120,000 for food! In addition the king was constantly paying the debts of nobles. The tutors of the king's children received $23,000 yearly, and the head chambermaid of the queen made $10,000 off the annual sale of partly burned candles. Altogether, from 1774 to 1789, $16,000,000 had been given to members of the royal family.

But it was the privileges that sprang from feudal rights that were the most obnoxious. It is true that peasant proprietors were increasing in number, a third of France, according to Arthur Young, belonging to them in 1788.[1] Even if this estimate be too high, the fact remains that not all the land was in feudal tenure. Yet these peasant farms were small at the best, and became even smaller through division among the children of a proprietor at his death.[2] It was almost inevitable that the peasant should be forced into the landless class. But while thus the poorer members of the nobility and the peasantry alike were detached from their land, one relationship persisted. Whether or not he had sold his château or fields, the noble had still feudal rights within the limits of what was or had been his ancestral fief. In fact, as the Duc d'Aiguillon said on the night of August 4, 1789, in many cases these feudal rights were the only property a noble possessed. He took his toll from the wine, the bridge, the mill, the fair, the village scales, the oven, the wine-press. For the noble who still owned the estate there were, in addition, still other sources of income. Every transfer of the leasehold paid some fee to the lord. What was worse, a part of the rental for some farms was the money equivalent for certain absurd and wicked

[1] Lavoisier estimated that in 1789 there were 450,000 small proprietors living on their estates. Boiteau, *État de la France, 1789*, 6. Von Sybel, *French Revolution*, I, 3, calls attention to the fact that to-day the land of France is divided approximately equally between three classes of proprietors, the very rich, the very poor, and the middle class. These last are the result of the Revolution.

[2] Arthur Young speaks of estates containing ten roods with a single tree, and Turgot said the division was carried so far that a property just sufficient for one family was divided among six. Cf. De Tocqueville, *L'Ancien Régime*, 60.

duties owed by peasants of feudal times to their lord. In some regions of France, for instance, a part of the duties of the peasant farmer had been to beat the marshes to keep the frogs quiet while the lady in the château was ill, and this duty had been commuted into a fixed sum of money. Other money payments at the marriage of peasant girls were compensation for ancient privileges far more atrocious. Altogether the peasants paid fourteen per cent of their income to their seigneurs.

Perhaps as senseless and exasperating as any privilege of the nobility was the exclusive right of hunting over the farms of the estate. For forty-five miles about Paris, for instance, were the royal *capitaineries*, or game preserves, in which all farms were to be kept free of fences or other hindrances to the king's hunting.[1] The same was true on a smaller scale about each feudal château. The peasant could not hoe his corn or pull his weeds before a certain date lest the young rabbits might be disturbed. At any moment he had to be ready to see a troop of gay cavaliers and ladies with horses and dogs sweep over his grain in pursuit of some half-tame deer. And this was not all. The deer and the pigeons and all the other game could not be killed by the farmer, even if they were destroying his crops. He could not even build fences to keep them out! He must fasten logs to his dog's collar to keep him from running after game, and he might not keep a gun to kill the wolves.[2] How

[1] Aug. 30, 1781, Louis XVI. killed 460 pieces. In fourteen years he killed more than 190,000 pieces of game of all sorts.

[2] *Cahier* of the Third Estate of Chaumont in Champagne.

universally hateful and oppressive were these rights of hunting may be seen from the fact that they are mentioned in nearly every bill of complaint sent to the States General in 1789.

It should be remembered that all these privileges enjoyed by the nobles were in return for practically no service on their part. In the old feudal days the lords had felt some sense of obligation toward their villeins, but while destroying the political power of the feudal nobles, the kings of France had left them all their feudal dues. It was a fatal mistake. Much better had it been for the peasantry if their nobles had, like the German nobles, kept some of their old rights of government. For then they would have kept nearer the peasantry; they would have lived more at home; they would have fulfilled that duty which was the chief justification of the feudal system, the protection of the weak by the strong. As it was, the French noble lived on his estate only when forced so to do in the interest of economy. The evil effects of such absenteeism were recognized by Frenchmen, and the nobility of Blois, in their *cahier* sent the States General, justified their surrender of privileges as tending to the benefit of the small nobility. They declare their belief "that a proprietor who fulfills the obligation of his heritage, spreads about him prosperity and happiness; that the effort he makes to increase his revenues increases at the same time the mass of the agricultural products of the realm; that the country districts are covered with châteaux and manors, formerly inhabited by the French nobility, but now abandoned; that a great public interest

would be subserved by inducing proprietors to seek again, so far as possible, their interests in the country." But this was precisely what the nobility as a class did not desire. Arthur Young, writing from Nantes, describes the country as "deserted; or if a gentleman is in it, you find him in some wretched hole, to save that money which is lavished with profusion in the luxuries of the capital." And so to Paris and Versailles the noble went; there, as far as his means or his credit permitted, to live like every other absentee landlord, intrusting the management of his estate to an agent who was held less strictly to the care of the tenants than to supplying funds for his master's life at the capital. It was because the personal bond between lord and peasant was thus broken, as well as because of the sale of estates to an upstart nobility, that in the face of the great philosophical movement making for human equality there should have sprung up between 1780 and 1789 a distinct feudal reaction. Throughout France the seigneurs were verifying their titles and their leases, and were enforcing more vigorously than ever their feudal claims.[1] This fact throws light upon the fierceness with which such rights were attacked by the peasants in 1789, as well as the stubbornness of the reactionary members of the Second Estate during the period of attempted reform.

It would be a mistake to think of the order of the nobility as closed. It was being constantly recruited from the wealthy commoners. Titles were sold by hundreds and thousands; nor was the spirit of priv-

[1] Chérest, *La Chute de l'Ancien Régime*, I, 49.

ileges any more restricted. Even if a wealthy commoner did not purchase a title, his tastes and interests lay rather with the privileged classes than with the unprivileged. So it came about that there were many points of similarity between the first two and the wealthier part of the Third Estate.

To explain this Third Estate, it is not enough to compare it roughly with the Anglo-Saxon middle class. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there grew up alongside of the feudal nobles a class of well-to-do townspeople, who as individuals owed no feudal dues, and whom trade sometimes made masters even of the nobles themselves. As time went by, this class of untitled men gradually acquired some political importance. The king, for good and sufficient reasons, recognized its right to assent to being taxed, and its representatives formed a third of the great national assembly known as the States General, the clergy and the nobility furnishing the two other thirds. But by the eighteenth century the Third Estate, or commons, itself had begun to divide into classes.[1] They were the *bourgeoisie*, the peasants, and the artisans. The interests of these various classes were by no means identical. The *bourgeoisie*, composed of traders, had grown well to do, had their properties, large and small, and, unfortunately, had at the same time become vulgar and selfish. They had even less sympathy with the suffering peasants and artisans than had the nobles. The peasants were the farmers of the nation. As has already appeared, they some-

[1] Reliable figures place the population of France in 1789 between twenty-six and twenty-seven millions. Of these, approximately, twenty millions lived in the country. Boiteau, *Etat de la France en 1789*, 11, 12.

times owned their little farms (though generally subject to some outgrown feudal dues), but more often tilled a piece of ground under feudal tenure, and contrived as best they could to save enough for the ever-present tax-collector and to keep body and soul together. The artisans lived in cities, and constituted a class whose rights were even less clearly seen than they are to-day.

Clearly enough, therefore, it would not be correct to think of this untitled class as homogeneous or animated by the same spirit. Such unity was impossible in anything except the most general principles. Even among townspeople, the guild system was the source of endless jealousies. Each trade thus organized had definite privileges upon which it insisted. We read of bitter warfare between wigmakers and bakers over social precedence! How much greater must have been the lack of sympathy between the peasant and the banker. Arthur Young, traveling in southern France, overtook a woman with bent form and furrowed face. He thought her sixty or seventy years old, but she stoutly maintained she was but twenty-eight. She was the wife of a small peasant proprietor. They owned a patch of ground, a cow, a poor little horse, and seven children. Yet proprietors though they were, they owed one seigneur a yearly due of forty-two pounds of flour and three chickens; to another one hundred and twenty-six pounds of oats, one chicken, and one *sou*. Compare with the misery of this poor woman the condition of a successful member of the *bourgeoisie* of some provincial town, who, after being a manufacturer or

a merchant, retired on his fortune, with very likely a patent of hereditary nobility; his wife, who had probably assisted in his rise by the arts of a saleswoman and by her talent for business, being called Madame, like a duchess.

It is, indeed, not surprising to discover that there was no equality in privilege between the *bourgeoisie* and the other elements of the Third Estate. The relations of the two were those of superiors and inferiors. The *bourgeoisie* clearly constituted an untitled aristocracy, quite as conscious of its social position as was the real nobility. Nothing shows this plainer than the difference in the two elements of municipal government, the *commune* and the municipality. The *commune*—never to be confused with anything like economic communism—was the armed association of all the Third Estate in a town or village; the municipality was the governing body of the town, and was composed exclusively of the *bourgeoisie*. By such an arrangement danger was shared by all commoners alike, but the perquisites and honors of office went to the *bourgeoisie* alone. In many if not all parts of France the *bourgeoisie* was free from one or more forms of taxation. The very right of labor was safe only in their hands, and they, quite as much as the aristocracy of the court, were ready to oppress the masses, while the mayors of the towns were notoriously venal, buying office and being bought themselves apparently with small sense of official honesty. It is to this extension of class inequality and consequent class hatred that one must look for the origin of that suspicion of the *bourgeoisie* displayed by the

masses during certain periods of the Revolution. That conservative spirit which, in the Constitution of 1791, set a property qualification for suffrage, was to be followed by a fierce determination on the part of the Jacobin leaders to rid the Revolution of all *bourgeois* control. Their brief success but deepened the class hatred, and to this day the proletariat of France regards all property-holders, from the small shopkeeper to the millionaire, as hereditary enemies.

But in 1789 the horrors of the Terror were unforeseen. The Third Estate, with all its inner jealousies, was at one in its appreciation of the injustice done it by the Old Régime. Quite as galling to the *bourgeoisie* as political neglect was the social inferiority to which it was relegated by fashionable society. Commerce was already working a transfer of actual influence in the state, and the new rulers of commercial France very naturally demanded social and political recognition. Although the wars of Louis XV. had cost France her Indian and North American possessions, thanks to the Third Estate French trade was steadily increasing. The exports of 1776 were 309,000,000 francs, as over against 192,000,000 in 1748. John Law, despite the disastrous collapse of the "Mississippi Bubble," had shown the possibilities of paper money and bank credit, and the *bourgeoisie* had been the chief beneficiaries. It was possible for a banker's clerk like Necker to become enormously wealthy. Many of the old feudal fiefs, so Bouillé says in his Memoirs, were in the hands of the *bourgeois* of the cities. It was natural, therefore, for the class to appreciate its own importance. Filling nearly every

important administrative office in the nation, outside the sinecures and the very highest positions at court, the lawyers, bankers, physicians, however indifferent they might be to the state of the peasantry, chafed under the pretensions and privileges of the nobility. "What is the Third Estate?" asked Siéyès in his famous pamphlet. "Everything. What has it been until now? Nothing. What does it ask for? To become something!"

In no part of the national life did the distinction between the privileged and unprivileged classes more strikingly appear than in the army. The military forces of France embraced the militia, and the regular army consisting of one hundred and one regiments of infantry and sixty-two regiments of cavalry. The militia was raised by conscription nominally, from all Frenchmen between eighteen and forty years of age, but those exempted from the service were very numerous, so that practically only provincials were enlisted, and of these only those peasants who were desperately poor. Desertion from the militia, or even absence without leave, was punished with a life sentence to the galleys; but not even this severity could always hold the conscripts to their term of six years. Yet these peasant troops were noted for their valor, and together with the municipal guards, were to form the bulk of those wonderful armies that the Revolution cast out upon Europe in the name of liberty.

According to official estimates, in 1787 the "active army," on a peace footing, included 187,483 officers and men, with a total war footing, including militia, of 367,695. But these figures are certanly untrust-

worthy, for when, in July, 1789, Marshal de Broglie became Minister of War, the "active army" amounted only to 163,684 officers and men.[1] The regular army was not raised by conscription, but was composed of men who nominally had been enlisted; but even a superficial knowledge of European recruiting systems of the eighteenth century, with their "force gangs" and their crimps, with their innumerable methods of stealing or deceiving men, arouse suspicions as to the voluntary character of the service. Yet among the various reforms attempted by Louis XVI. was that of this recruiting process, and it is likely that the private soldiers in the regular army were mostly men who had chosen the military profession with reasonable freedom. Their term of service was four years, at the end of which they could reënlist for four or eight years more.

Recruited thus from desperate or worthless men, the quality of the French regular troops was inferior to that of the militia; yet even thus, they were hardly the "brigands" their officers called them. Rochambeau even boasts that the French troops in America could camp in an orchard and not steal an apple, but if this were really the case, it must have been due to unusual conditions. They were not generally noted for such self-restraint. The actual condition of the French soldier was one about which different opinions can easily be held. The fact that men entered the service by enlistment, and often, if not generally, made it the profession of their lives, argues in its favor. English observers speak with respect of them, espe-

[1] Boiteau, *Etat de la France en 1789*, 261.

cially of their uniformly good appearance—a uniformity reached sometimes by such expedients as fierce mustaches stuck on youthful upper lips, and uncomfortably tight uniforms. But on the other side are facts which made military service a very hotbed of discontent, and explain the enthusiasm with which the rank and file of the army welcomed the Revolution.

Under the new regulations introduced by St. Germain, Minister of War from 1775 to 1777, military discipline was modeled upon that of Frederick II. of Prussia. Officers and privates alike were displeased, and among the petitions contained in the cahiers of 1789 are those like that of the Third Estate of Versailles, to the effect that "barbarous punishments, taken from the codes of foreign nations and introduced into the new military regulations, be abolished and replaced with regulations more in conformity with the genius of the nation." Perhaps it was this "genius of the nation" that made flogging in the ranks a cause of the downfall of the reform ministry of Louis XVI. Yet at this time flogging was practiced in the English army, where the men only laughed at it. The food and accommodation for the privates were inferior, but the hospital arrangements were not altogether bad. The common soldier's uniform was generally in good condition, but his comfort was not a matter of great concern. Even stockings were apparently wanting, as we learn from a rather unpleasant anecdote of the times. And to cap all, the private's pay was only six *sous* a day.

From this condition there was little chance of escape through promotion. A private could almost never

rise to the ranks of a commissioned officer. About ten years before the Revolution it was decreed that no one should hold even the rank of captain unless his family had been noble for four generations. Even among the nobility, promotion went by favor, and nobles without influence at court often resigned in disgust. Yet this was not due to the small number of offices, for in 1789 there was no less than one general for every one hundred and fifty-seven men.[1] But in the contrast between the private and his officer the injustice of the Old Régime is especially in evidence; for, as Taine says, in place of hardship there were authority, honors, money, leisure, good living, social enjoyments, and private theatricals for the officers. Of the $18,000,000[2] paid the army, $9,200,000, or more than half, went to the officers. There is little wonder that the ranks should have been composed of "the scum of society" and "the sweepings of the jails," or that there should have been sixty thousand desertions in eight years; or that the common soldiers should have hated their officers; or that they should have been among the first to welcome a revolution. For hidden in this despised and abused soldiery was many a bright and ambitious man. From the ranks or the lower officers of the army of the Old Régime came a Pichegru, an Hoche, an Oudinot, a Murat, a Bernadotte, a Soult, a Ney. To these men the Revolution, whether for weal or woe, brought a career. Without it they would have suffered and died members of the despised *canaille*.[3]

[1] Stephens. *French Revolution*, I, 371.

[2] This does not include the amount paid the officials by the military bureau.

[3] See an excellent chapter (7) in Lowell, *Eve of the French Revolution*; and especially Babeau, *Vie militaire*; Boiteau, *Etat de la France en 1789*, chs. 10, 11.

# CHAPTER III

## SOCIAL CONTRASTS AND MORALITY

I. The Court: 1. General Character; 2. Etiquette; 3. Influence. II. The Peasantry: 1. Poverty; 2. General Condition. III. Moral Degeneracy: 1. In the Court; 2. In Upper Classes; 3. In Education of Children. IV. The Better Side of Fashionable Life: The Salons.

Within a society thus broken into the two great classes of the privileged and the unprivileged, the customs and habits of social life formed a series of striking contrasts. The king, of course, was at the head of the fashionable as well as of the political world. Versailles, a suburb of Paris with eighty thousand inhabitants, was the city of the court. There was the magnificent palace that Louis XIV., at the expense of thirty million dollars, had built in a swamp, and there the king held his court.[1] Few of the thousands of travelers who have visited that vast pile have escaped the temptation to repeople its wilderness of rooms with something more than the questionable pictures which now relate the glories of France. But for a modern it is all but impossible. The combination of vulgarity and display, of ceremony and indecency; the civilization which would permit the continuous holiday-life at the court and blinked at the total disregard of elementary economic principles that made such a holiday

[1] Twenty thousand men were employed two years in building the waterworks alone. Arthur Young, in 1787, however, declared that the canal was "not in such good repair as a farmer's horse-pond."

permanent; the possibility of a government in which the welfare of millions would be sacrificed to the whim of a light woman or the ambition of an adventurer; the artificiality of a life whose first principle was flattery and whose summit was a sinecure and a pension; the injustice of a system that, even more than the work of the modern spoils system, made the lobby and the conspiracy easy means by which to rifle a nation's income, while it put a reformer at the mercy of a court-clique or the king's confessor—all these, the inseparable elements of a picture of life at the court of Louis XV. and Louis XVI., are happily quite beyond the power of accurate representation.

It must be remembered that France had the reputation of being the most advanced nation in the world, and its customs were the model of all fashionable society. But even this consideration hardly prepares one for the extravagances of French society. Thirty persons were required to serve the king his dinner; four, a glass of wine and water.[1] There was the king's *lever*, in which the highest nobles of the realm stood about in the decorous flattery of silence to watch the king's toilet, a prince of the blood handing him his shirt.

There was sufficient etiquette in the queen's toilet to keep her waiting unclothed until the proper person was given precedence in handing her her garments. And yet so paradoxical was the court life, that the palace was noted for its vile odors; and when Marie Antoinette's first child was born, her room was so

[1] This morning toilet of the king was more or less a purely conventional thing. Louis XVI. would often rise early in the morning, go about his affairs, and then go to bed again to be ready for his *lever!*

crowded with spectators of all classes that it had to be partly cleared to prevent her fainting![1]

As for the number of people in attendance upon royalty, even after the economies of the first years of Louis XVI., the military retinue of the king numbered 9,050 persons, including all branches of the service except artillerists. His civil household numbered something like 4,000. Eighty persons were in attendance upon the Princess Elizabeth when she was a month old. Marie Antoinette's private stables in 1780 had 75 vehicles and 330 horses. The king had 1,857 horses, 217 vehicles, 1,458 men in liveries. In 1786 there were 150 pages in the palace, 128 musicians, 75 almoners and other religious officials, 48 doctors and assistants, 383 officers of the table, 103 waiters, 198 persons for the personal domestic service of the king. These were all intended for the palace at Versailles, but Louis XVI. had twelve others besides the Louvre, the Tuileries, and Chambord. Each of these palaces had its own army of servants.

This prodigality was by no means limited to the court. Especially in France, every noble of any importance must have his little Versailles, and waste his property and other people's property in maintaining his state, while all Europe must go bankrupt trying to live like the king of the French—who was himself going bankrupt most rapidly of all![2]

[1] In 1787, Arthur Young visited Versailles, and was shown the apartments of the king. He says that "it was amusing to see the blackguard figures that were walking uncontrolled about the palace, and even in his bedchamber; men whose rags betrayed them to be in the last stage of poverty."

[2] The memoirs of the time abound in illustrations of this extravagance. As picturesque as any is Thiébault's (*Memoirs*, I, 41) account of the fashionable crowd at Longchamps and the *demi-mondaine* carried off to prison in her carriage lined with mother-of-pearl and with solid silver hubs in the wheels, and drawn by horses with harnesses of silk and gold and shoes of silver.

Yet all this magnificence, with its vast unproductive expenditure, was after all no evidence of widespread comfort. "What a miracle," wrote Arthur Young at Nantes, "that all this splendor and wealth of the cities of France should be so unconnected with the country." The nobility, it will be remembered, were growing poorer, and in their places was rising a plutocratic *bourgeoisie* whose hand was against noble and proletarian alike. Over against the luxury of Versailles and the comparatively small class of wealthy persons must be placed the poverty, and even misery, of the peasantry and the masses in the cities. For thirty years before the Revolution the official correspondence from practically all portions of France reveals the pitiable condition of the lower classes, but just before its beginning bad harvests had made misery acute. In 1787 Arthur Young, from Calais southward, saw peasant women pulling weeds for their cows. Potatoes had just been introduced, but were looked upon with suspicion by the peasants.[1] A provincial assembly of lower Normandy officially reported that the artisans of its province were barely able to keep off starvation, and that in five districts the inhabitants lived only on buckwheat. In other parts of the country the peasants ate only corn, a mixture of flour, common seeds, and a little wheat. In Normandy oats were the chief diet of the poor, and elsewhere mixtures of various nuts, coarse grains, and milk. In Poitiers thousands of workingmen were eager to work at half-wages, while from all over the

[1] In order to encourage potato-culture, Louis XVI. at one time wore a potato-blossom in his button-hole

most fertile regions of France the officials reported thousands of industrious peasant farmers reduced to beggary. So narrow was the margin of the peasant's capital that a hailstorm or an inundation would make an entire province dependent upon charity. Nor was the misery due to mere loss of crops. Great stretches of land—one half or one quarter, says Arthur Young—lay waste. Agriculture was still mediæval in its methods. We have it on good authority that there were few or no iron plows in the entire country. As a result, while the English acre produced twenty-eight bushels, the French produced but eighteen.[1] Roads were bad, regular coaches almost unknown, transportation of crops almost impossible, and even when possible, checked by customs at the boundary of every province. The great majority of peasants possessed no capital, and especially in southern France were forced to become métayers, or farmers who paid rent in kind, the owner of the land furnishing all cattle and machinery. The father of Mirabeau declared that "agriculture as our peasants practice it is veritable drudgery; they die by thousands in childhood, and in maturity they seek places everywhere but where they should be."

The homes of the peasants were no better than their food and lot. Arthur Young, it is true, speaks occasionally of well-built cottages, but more often they were mere stables or barns, to which a chimney had been added, made of four poles and some mud. And as for the peasants themselves, Arthur Young

[1] It has been estimated that while in the matter of taxes the French farmer stood to the English as 3¾ to 2⅔, in the matter of produce his land was in the ratio only of 9 to 14.

finds men and women everywhere working barefooted, and declares the Souillac women to be "walking dunghills." The elder Mirabeau, who saw a company of peasants at a festival, describes them as "frightful looking men, or rather wild beasts, covered with coats of coarse wool, wearing wide leather belts pierced with copper nails, . . . . their faces haggard and covered with long matted hair, the upper portion pallid, and the lower distended, indicative of cruel delight and a sort of ferocious impatience."

The condition of the artisans of cities was perhaps less rigorous than that of the peasants, but it was bound to result in misery. Wages were low, the cost of bread was high, and far more than in these days of compulsory education, the surroundings of the poor were practically fixed for life. In the place of education was endless talk. Philosophical dreams, which in some crude shape were soon shared by the lowest classes, added new zest to discontent, while the uncertainty and severity of their life were rapidly breeding among the poor an incomparable brutality. Yet we must here discriminate. "The French peasant was far freer socially than the serfs of Germany, Italy, and Spain; and in Prussia, where the burdens of a vigorous and aggressive monarchy were added to those of feudalism, the peasants had to bear heavier loads even than those of Central France."[1] Travelers of the time, also, make it evident that the condition of the peasants varied greatly in different parts of the country, and in portions of France, especially in the north, they seem to have enjoyed some real pros-

[1] Rose, *Revolutionary and Napoleonic Era*, 19.

perity. But as one might well have conjectured, wherever the masses had come under the influence of the new thought, this very prosperity bred a more mutinous discontent. At the best, if they were more comfortable, they were the more certain victims of the sub-delegate of the intendant and the local tax-collector. The contrast between privileged and unprivileged was made all the more galling as men began on the one hand to believe passionately in the equality of "the natural man" preached by the philosophers, and on the other to taste the pleasure of owning even the smallest patch of ground and a few pieces of money.

It is to be expected that a national sense so blunted as to admit of such contrasts as these should also have retained little susceptibility to morality in other relations. It is true that pictures of national immorality are likely to be overcolored; witness current descriptions of life under the Cæsars and during the English Restoration. Fortunately, the vices and general reversion to animalism which characterize society which wealth has made parasitic are not to be found among the people as a whole. None the less, gladiatorial games are most damning testimony against the moral ideal of the Roman Empire, no matter how far Petronius may stand corrected by the gravestones of forgotten thousands. In the same way, the low moral condition of France may be seen with some accuracy in a literature much of which would hardly be allowed to pass through our mails, but which was praised by a woman like Madame Roland.

Most of all, however, may it be judged by the gen-

eral habits of fashionable and unfashionable folk of the time. As one might expect, the saddest spectacle of demoralization is to be seen in the court circle. Before the accession of Louis XVI. the social life, and often the state policy, of Versailles had been under the control of the mistresses of the king, the most celebrated being Madame de Pompadour and Madame du Barry, the last of whom was to perish miserably on the guillotine. Indeed, the regency of the Duke of Orleans and the reign of Louis XV. have become synonymous for all that is shameless. But with Louis XVI. matters were much improved. Louis was a young man of blameless life so far as conventional morality is concerned, and endeavored to purify his court. The effort was successful to some extent, but was really hopeless. The court nobility were without seriousness, and love affairs figured too largely in life to be abandoned. It is not necessary to plunge into the unclean stream of memoirs of the time, for it is altogether probable that half the stories they relate are nothing more than lies born of a prurient love of gossip. But the mere fact that about the queen, Marie Antoinette, there should so continually gather scandalous rumors, however little one may believe the worst of them,[1] is in itself sufficient evidence of widespread laxity in morals. The very imprudences of the queen, her choice of friends, and especially of four men as nurses when ill; the mere possibility of a scandalous affair like that of the Diamond Necklace, in which a cardinal of the church appeared to fancy it possible to win her favors by the present of jewels—all

[1] Thiébault, *Memoirs*, I, 43.

these things throw a singularly unpleasant light upon the court.

A similar license in manners, to use no stronger term, ran through all society. Husband and wife too frequently lived in only formal union, and marital unfaithfulness among the fashionable classes was shockingly palliated, even expected. Gouverneur Morris tells of ladies receiving him at their toilet; others tell of being received while their hostesses were in their bath of water made untransparent with milk. There was hardly a philosopher who lived a chaste life, and many of them were notoriously licentious. The father of Mirabeau only followed a tolerably widespread fashion when he brought his mistress into the midst of his family. But perhaps the most significant story—and with it we leave this unpleasant matter—concerns Voltaire. He had lived for years as the recognized lover of a most learned Madame du Châtelet. At her death he and her husband opened a locket the dead woman had worn most sacredly. The two strangely suited mourners looked at the portrait the locket contained—and silently closed its case. It was of neither of them, but of a third man!

And yet French society at this time was probably the most polished the world has ever seen. Manners were almost a profession, for who could tell what honor might not hang upon a bit of repartee or a well-done bow? From the very cradle the children of the nobility and rich *bourgeoisie* were taught the ways of the great world. Family life itself grew into a mass of etiquette. Until the rise of Rousseau's influence, children were apparently turned over to servants

and teachers. Talleyrand, for instance, did not see his parents for years, and when about ten years old called on his mother once a week, on her reception-day.[1] Until 1783 little boys had their hair powdered, wore swords, and kissed little girls' hands with all the dignity of older dandies. A girl of six years wore corsets, a hoop petticoat, false hair, and—sometimes—rouge! Taine rather cuttingly says that the fulcrum of education was the dancing-master.[2]

It must not be forgotten, however, that within the salons of many a Paris merchant, learned men and brilliant women gathered to discuss all sorts of questions in philosophy and economy and theology. Those who shared in this better social life of the Old Régime looked back to it as a golden age. And it was to some degree characteristic of other cities than Paris. These salons were the centers of that political influence so largely wielded by the women of the day, and were to become even more influential in the reform movements that led up to the summoning of the States General. But it would be impossible to say that they indicated or generated any moral virility or conservative influence. They were the stage upon which brilliant talkers, both men and women, could display their incomparable wit and good breeding; but they were none the less the luxuries of the

[1] Talleyrand, *Memoirs*, I, 9-11.

[2] Arthur Young describes the reckless driving of the fashionable folk in Paris, and adds: "If young noblemen at London were to drive their chaises in streets without foot-ways, as their brethren do at Paris, they would speedily and justly get very well threshed, or rolled in the kennel." And he adds this very curious social deduction from the poor character of cabs and the absence of sedan-chairs: "To this circumstance also it is owing that all persons of small or moderate fortune are forced to dress in black, with black stockings." The antipathy of the revolutionary régime to all of the trappings of aristocracy may have been due in part to these facts.

wealthy. The simple fact that such institutions could flourish then, and only then, is a testimony to the poverty of political opportunity and the wealth of the dilettante spirit.[1]

A meeting of the Sons of Liberty in distressed little Massachusetts might have been held at the same hour as the brilliant gathering in some Parisian salon. It could have been no more radical in its utterances; indeed, beyond the accidents of place and dress and etiquette, it could not have been more distracted with dreams of liberty. That one wrought a different result from the other is due, of course, to many causes, but to none more fundamentally than this: the salon was composed of dilettantes; the liberty meeting of Anglo-Saxon men of affairs.

[1] "The society [in Paris] for a man of letters, or who has any scientific pursuit, cannot be exceeded. . . . Persons of the highest rank pay an attention to science and literature, and emulate the character they confer. . . . Politics are too much attended to in England to allow a due respect to be paid to anything else; and should the French establish a freer government, academicians will not be held in such estimation, when rivaled in the public esteem by the orators who hold forth liberty and property in a free parliament."—Arthur Young, in 1787.

# CHAPTER IV

## THE CLERGY AND RELIGION

I. The Privileged and Unprivileged: 1. The Higher Clergy; 2. The Curates and Vicars; 3 Their Respective Incomes. II. The Clergy and the Peasants. III. The Clergy and Society: 1. Their Attitude toward Intellectual and Religious Freedom; 2. Unbelief; 3. Credulity; 4. The Loss of Moral Influence.

The relations of the Roman Catholic Church of France both toward the Pope and toward the government for centuries had been marked by a singular combination of independence and subservience. Into this troubled matter, however, it is not necessary for the student of the Revolution to enter. Until the formation of the civil code of the clergy, which was to play so prominent a part in the early period of the Revolution, the clergy may be regarded as an order of the state so compacted by history and community of interests as to be practically a unit—certainly the most unified of the three orders of the nation. Yet even within the church there was the fatal cleavage into the privileged and the unprivileged. The former included archbishops, bishops, abbots, and other high clergy, while the curates, or country parsons, who did the great work of the church, constituted the mass of unprivileged. These curates, though as a class by no means models of pastoral activity, were in sympathy

with the oppressed peasantry, for they themselves were drawn almost exclusively from the lower classes of the Third Estate, and could never hope to rise into the great offices. The church of France herein was inferior to the church of the Middle Ages. In the eleventh century the son of a poor carpenter became Gregory VII., and a wandering English priest, Hadrian IV. A few figures will tell more eloquently than description just what the relation of these two classes to each other was. The total number of monks has been estimated at 23,000; of nuns, 37,000. Of the secular clergy there were 60,000 curates and vicars, and about 11,000 higher clergy. This in a population of 26,000,000 is not excessive. Yet the church held in real property in 1789 perhaps a fifth of all France. Its total wealth amounted to perhaps a billion dollars, and its total income was about $60,000,000.[1] Of this sum the higher clergy had five-sixths, the curates had the rest. The average salary received by the curates in 1784 was the largest ever known in France, and it amounted to $140. This, considering the purchasing power of money, would have enabled them to keep body and soul together, but out of it they had to pay a tax of $15 or $20. "I pity," said Voltaire, "the lot of the country pastor, obliged to contend for a sheaf of wheat with his unfortunate parishioner." Contrast with this pittance the incomes of the higher clergy. Even a monk enjoyed an income of about $800 a year. The abbot of Clairvaux—the successor of St. Bernard!—never drove out except with four

[1] $36,000,000 from tithes and $24,000,000 from landed property; but these figures are not unquestionable, and include the cost of collecting the tithes. Taine makes the total net income $40,000,000. (*Ancient Régime*, 14.)

horses and preceded by a mounted groom. The average income of the 131 archbishops and bishops was between $10,000 and $20,000. The abbot of Clairvaux had an income of $60,000 to $75,000; Cardinal de Rohan, of $200,000. His palace had 700 beds and his stables accommodation for 180 horses. He had fourteen butlers, and could entertain at one time 200 guests with their servants. Cardinal de Rohan, it is true, was the most magnificent as well as wealthiest of the ecclesiastics, but others were not far behind him.

If this well-to-do and privileged clergy had only earned their pay, if they had shared at all in the work of improving the condition of the lower classes, this disproportion in income would be more excusable; but as a matter of fact, with notable exceptions, the upper clergy were corrupt and useless. The curates and vicars did about all the church work that was done. In many cases these unfortunate men were hired, at a beggarly pittance, by some clergyman or monastery enjoying a good income to attend to the work of the parish, while their employer enjoyed himself in Paris. The abbot of Sainte-Croix de Bernay, in Normandy, received $11,400 a year, but lived in Paris and hired a curate for $210 to care for the parish of 4,000 communicants. And the worst of it all was that the curate, like the private soldier, had no hope of promotion. The higher clergy, like the officers, were drawn from the nobility and richer *bourgeoisie*. Of all the 131 archbishops and bishops, only five (and they the poorest) were from the lower classes. Ecclesiastical as well as military offices went by favor. The possible future the curate must expect was to

continue his work among the half-starved and over-taxed peasants, and keep body and soul together as best he could on his wages. It is only natural to discover, therefore, that the curates sided with the other unprivileged classes, and when the opportunity came, opposed the upper clergy.

The clergy derived a vast income from the tithes.[1] These were not always a tenth of the produce of the farmer, but are supposed by Taine to have equaled fourteen per cent of the entire product. Even if this be an exaggeration, it remains true that the tithes were paid by the peasant and not by the proprietor, and were therefore in addition to taxes and feudal dues. The chief if not the only justification for this ecclesiastical tax lay in the fact that the tithes constituted the only poor-fund in France.

But we are not quite done with the higher clergy. In speaking of them, it has to be remembered that under the Old Régime the upper clergy were something more than mere pastors and preachers. They were also feudal lords, enjoying the privileges of feudalism. Thirty-two bishops and many abbots besides were the temporal as well as spiritual lords of cities and territory, the receivers of all sorts of feudal dues. As feudal lords, these great ecclesiastics held their courts, administered their estates, enjoyed their feudal dues, and maintained a glorious company of attendants. And what is far more disgraceful, as feudal lords some of them kept serfs.

[1] In 1789 this amounted to $36,600,000. See Bailly, *Hist. Finan. de la France*, II. 278. It is to be remembered that the church paid practically no taxes. When reorganized in 1790, approximately $37,000,000 were appropriated by the state for all ecclesiastics.

The influence of the church upon social life had greatly diminished. The peasantry chafed under being forced to give fourteen per cent of their incomes to the clergy as tithes, hated the higher clergy as feudal lords, and appreciated their curates only as the curates shared in the common distress. Only in Vendée and a few similarly situated provinces were the upper clergy held by their people in such affection that actual civil war followed the attempt to put in force the constitution of 1791, with its provisions for making the clergy civil officials. Speaking generally, the church had lost its hold, also, upon the higher classes. The philosophic age was bitterly anti-ecclesiastical, even when not anti-Christian. Singularly enough, although holding strenuously to their ecclesiastical prerogatives, the upper clergy were affected by the current skepticism. A curate of Paris was once asked whether the bishops really believed the doctrines upon which they insisted so strenuously. "There may be four or five," he replied. It will not do to take such a bit of flotsam too seriously, but there can be no doubt that leading churchmen gravely discussed the probability of immortality, and were in some cases openly profligate. So far as its more lucrative offices were concerned, the church had become a mere profession, to which bright young men with no other prospects could be apprenticed. What religious influence could one expect to be exerted by men like Cardinal de Rohan, or like Talleyrand of Autun? Yet the church still persecuted Protestants. In Normandy we find the clergy wishing laws preventing the

"Protestants from building churches, and even from assembling at sound of the bell that called Catholics to service."[1] The otherwise rather remarkably liberal *cahier*[2] of the clergy of Blois[3] laments the extension of religious liberty to Protestants, as well as the growing freedom of the press. Loménie de Brienne, an archbishop though a notorious unbeliever, in addressing Louis XVI. at his coronation, said: "Complete the work of Louis the Great. To you is reserved the privilege of giving the final blow to Calvinism in your kingdom." This exhortation was very possibly merely official, but not so the work of clergy in Languedoc, where the bishops controlled the province. There, almost to the time of the calling of the States General in 1789, congregations were broken up by dragoons, and Protestant ministers were hung.[4] Even such *cahiers* of the clergy in 1789 as do not lament the extension of religious freedom to Calvinists, believe the royal decree of 1788 allowing them political protection far too generous. They would at least keep Calvinists out from all judicial offices, and Necker, when in fact at the head of the national finances, was not allowed his proper position in the cabinet simply because he was a Protestant. One cause of the great popularity of Voltaire during the latter part of his life is to be found in his securing a pension for the family of the executed Protestant Calas.

[1] Chassin, *Cahiers, 1789*, II, 192.

[2] Instructions given their delegates to the States General in 1789.

[3] It is signed by fifty-three parish priests, fourteen priors, eight canons, eight priests, three deans, three abbots, three curates, a chaplain, a friar, a deacon, and twenty-seven unclassified persons.

[4] Relatively this is not as atrocious as it sounds. Absolute religious freedom was practically unknown in the eighteenth century throughout Europe. Even in America it was a novelty.

Despite (or quite as possibly, on account of) this intolerance, unbelief spread rapidly among the *bourgeoisie* and the nobility. In 1764 Hume, at a dinner in Paris, happened to say that he had never chanced to meet an atheist. "You have been somewhat unfortunate," said his host; "but at the present moment you are sitting at table with seventeen of them." Indeed, it is altogether probable that in no other age has the great mass of intelligent persons so uniformly endeavored to fulfill the law of atheistic philosophy and rid themselves of "the fear of invisible powers." Horace Walpole, who would scarcely be classed among radical Christians, writes with fine sarcasm from France in 1765, "They think me quite profane for having any belief left." Yet it is possible that as in so many aspects of French life a reaction had set in by 1789, for the more atheistic philosophy of Diderot had quite given way to the teachings of Rousseau, in which the idea of God played no small logical part. There was, however, no appreciable return to the church, and the conduct of leading ecclesiastics, as well as the enforced privations of the curates and vicars, made ecclesiastical influence morally ineffective.

Along with this decay of faith came a sudden, though natural, outburst of credulity among the *bourgeoisie* and nobles. In some ways this credulity was to have unexpected results. Believers in occultism joined themselves into the enigmatical society of the Illuminati, which was supposed to have lodges in all parts of France, and whose mysterious symbols, "L. P. D.," came later to be interpreted as *Lilia pedibus distrue*—"trample the lilies (of the house of Bourbon)

under foot." And there was Lavater, who could read men's futures in their faces, and Mesmer, who, driven politely from Vienna, came to Paris with his animal magnetism to win enormous popularity and fees, though at the end to be put to flight by a royal investigating commission of physicians. And besides these there were not a few others—Cazatte, Montgolfier, Babœuf, Puységur. But most fantastic of all the prophets whom the emancipated Parisians—and such provincials as were received—went out to see and to bring in to honor was one Cagliostro. This magnificent charlatan began his career one can hardly say where, but in 1781 he was astonishing the people of Strasburg by his cures. He was one of the Illuminati, but exceeded the boldest of that body. He declared he had been a friend of Abraham, had been one of the guests at the wedding in Cana, and had discovered the art of living forever. His mighty gift of lying fairly dazzled society into taking him at his own valuation. De Rohan, a cardinal of the church, is said to have erected to him a marble bust with an inscription hailing him as God of the earth. His cures were counted miracles. He was said to make diamonds out of nothing. His charities were boundless, his wealth apparently limitless. Altogether he is the most splendid rascal of his sort one meets in history. But he was no more ready to deceive than society was eager to be duped. Take, for instance, his resurrection of D'Alembert, the atheist, one of the writers of the *Encyclopedie*. Cagliostro gathered his audience at three in the morning and placed them in front of an iron chain and put out the light. A mysterious voice

bade all unpleasant reptiles and unfree men depart. A gleaming chair appeared, with the words *Philosophy*, *Nature*, *Truth* successively appearing above it. The chain rattled, and in the chair appeared a skeleton wrapped in a winding-sheet. It was D'Alembert, long since dead. He could hear, but could not speak aloud. Cagliostro, however, knew what he *would* say! So they questioned him. Among others, some one asked him if he had seen the other world. True to his pre-mortal unbelief the resurrected philosopher replied, "There is no other world." It does not seem to have been asked whence, if there were no other world, the specter came. Such skepticism would have been unworthy of these skeptics!

It was inevitable that in this breaking down of religious authority and faith, morality itself should also have lost its authoritative elements, and to this cause must be largely attributed the spectacle of a society almost perfect in its outer habits lost in perverse immorality and selfishness.

All this in time was to react with fearful violence upon the church itself. The sight of the luxury of the higher clergy, righteous indignation that they should wring their dues from peasants already overburdened with taxes, was working a fierce hatred of clergy and church alike. If the Revolution seems godless, the cause is to be found chiefly in the godless church of the Old Régime. Faith, indeed, there was in France, but a faith that had its grounds in philosophy, not religion. Reformers there were in France, and reforms—but nothing needed both more than the

church of France. The friend of the rich, living off the poor, the enemy of intellectual freedom, the champion of abuse, the sharer in moral degeneracy—the salt had lost its savor, wherewith could it be salted?

# CHAPTER V

## INTELLECTUAL EMANCIPATION THROUGH PHILOSOPHY

I. Montesquieu: 1. Early Life; 2. Position as to Monarchy and the State; 3. Effect of His Work. II. The Physiocrats. III. Voltaire: 1. Early Life and Remarkable Talents; 2. His Attitude toward Religion and the Church; 3. His Chief Significance. IV. The Encyclopedists: 1. Hostility to Religion; 2. General Destructive Influence. V. Rousseau: 1. Early Life; 2. Dijon Essays; 3. *The Social Contract;* 4. His Extraordinary Influence on Society and Politics. VI. The Absence of Intellectual Freedom in France.

The French Revolution was in large measure due to the passion for liberty and equality aroused by the great philosophical movement which swept over Europe during the eighteenth century. In no period of the world's history, except, perhaps, our own age, has thought been more active than in France during the half-century just preceding the Revolution. And there was no more potent agent in the destruction of the monarchy than the philosophy that seemed to many the chief ornament of the reigns of Louis XV. and Louis XVI.

But France did not furnish the original material for this thought; that was done by the thinkers of Germany, and especially of England. Ideas, some one has said, have to pass through France to be popularized. Whether or not this is true universally, it is

certainly true of that peculiarly revolutionary thought that spread over all the western world in the eighteenth century.[1] The mediating office of the French may be said to have first been filled by the great political philosopher Montesquieu.[2] Born of a noble family, and inheriting from his uncle the important and lucrative office of president of the Parlement of Bordeaux, after a few years of official life he sold his place and devoted himself to travel. He went to England in 1729 as a friend of Lord Chesterfield, and immediately devoted himself to the study of its constitution. England seemed to him "the most free country in the world." From this visit may probably be dated his bias in favor of the English form of monarchy.

The fundamental purpose of his political philosophy was the discovery of some absolute, natural standard of justice by which all laws might be tested and to which they should conform. But unlike some of his contemporaries, Montesquieu finds this standard in human reason. "Law in general is human reason in so far as it governs all the nations of the earth; and the political and civil laws of each nation should be but the particular cases to which that human reason is applied." And he goes on to say that "the government most in conformity with nature is that whose particular disposition is most in accord with

[1] On the influence of English on French thought in the eighteenth century, see Buckle, *History of Civilization in England*, I, ch. 12.

[2] Montesquieu's epoch-making work, *Esprit des Lois* (English translation by Nugent, *Spirit of the Laws*), was published in 1748. It had been preceded in 1734 by his almost equally famous book, *Considérations sur les Causes de la Grandeur et de la Décadence des Romains*, which is the first serious attempt in modern times at presenting a philosophy of history. Previous to these works he had published, in 1721, *Lettres Persiennes*, a satire sometimes licentious but always witty, upon the France of the Regency.

the disposition of the people for which it is established."[1]

Over against current French ideas he declared that "the conjunction of the wills of individuals constitutes a state," and that laws "should be adapted in such a manner to the people for whom they are framed, that it should be a great chance if those of one nation suit another."[2] Yet here he halts. A republic, he thought, could naturally have only a small territory, for in a large republic—and his words, written before 1748, were, of course, those of total ignorance of any such republic—he supposed public good would be "sacrificed to a thousand private views." A monarchy, he goes on to say, should be of moderate rather than either small or great size; and he could see for an empire no possible form of government but a despotism in which "the law should be derived from a single person."[3] All this is far from revolutionary teaching; and how conservative he was appears also in these words: "It is sometimes necessary to change certain laws, but the case is rare; and when it comes they ought to be touched only with a trembling hand"; and perhaps even more in his assertion that political, like moral good, lies between extremes.[4]

So far as a correct philosophy of the state is concerned, Montesquieu was often far astray. His erudition, though great, was often superficial, and sometimes invalidated his generalizations. He magnifies the influence of natural forces like climate and

[1] *Esprit des Lois*, bk. i, ch. 3.
[2] *Esprit des Lois*, bk. i, ch. 3.
[3] *Esprit des Lois*, bk. viii, chs. 16-20.
[4] *Esprit des Lois*, bk. xxix, ch. 1.

soil, he does not perceive clearly the distinction between absolute and responsible rulers; and although he recognizes the necessity of a division of the three functions of a state, he does not insist upon the independence of the judiciary. The effect of his work, marked as it was by profound learning and sober judgment, was greater in England and America than in France; yet even in France it served to bring into sharp relief the burdens and inequalities of a nation so far removed from anything like legal uniformity or the enjoyment of universal justice. But more important, it ushered in that great philosophical crusade of which Quesnay and the Physiocrats, Voltaire and the Encyclopedists, were the leaders. Beside the radicalism of these philosophers the moderation of Montesquieu is very marked; to the philosophers themselves it was immeasurably hateful.[1]

At the same time that Montesquieu was laying the foundations for modern political science, François Quesnay and Jean Claude Marie Vincent were laying the foundations for modern economics. The so-called Mercantilist school of economists had held that national wealth depends upon the accumulation of precious metals by a country and the consequent maintenance of a "favorable" balance of trade. Agriculture had therefore been neglected, and commerce emphasized. The result of these teachings had been that from the time of their great French champion, Colbert, the minister of Louis XIV., government had devoted itself

[1] The best biography of Montesquieu is Vian, *Vie de Montesquieu*. See further, Lowell, *Eve of French Revolution*, ch. 10; Flint, *Philosophy of History*, 262-280; Woolsey, *Political Science*, I, 168-171; Lévy-Bruhl, *History of Modern Philosophy in France*, ch. 5.

to the regulation of trade by all sorts of subsidies and restrictions. But both in France and England, as men came under the influence of the philosophical impulse, such artificial notions grew unpopular,[1] and chiefly under the influence of Quesnay there grew up a school known as the Physiocrats, because of its insistence upon "nature." So far from regarding commerce as the sole source of a nation's wealth, the Physiocrats declared that however useful the calling of merchants might be, it was "sterile," since all their profits came ultimately from the farmer. It was but a legitimate outcome of these views when they taught that as the land was the sole source of wealth, so it should be the sole object of taxation. Further than this, they insisted upon the abolition of all governmental restrictions of an economic sort and upon perfect freedom of trade as a natural right. "*Laissez faire, laissez passer*" was the motto they would give to governments.[2] "Let every man be free to cultivate in his field such crops as his interest, his means, the nature of the ground, may suggest as rendering the greatest possible return"—these words of Quesnay are a truism to-day, but were almost revolutionary when the Royal Council, through an intendant, fixed for a town or parish the crop it should plant, under threat of severe punishment. But even more revolutionary was the implication, more or less explicitly drawn by the school, that government, though neces-

[1] Richard Cantillon was the forerunner of the new physiocratic school. See Jevons, *Contemporary Review*, June, 1881. His most important work, *Essai sur la Nature du Commerce en General*, has been republished (1892) in *Harvard University Publications*.

[2] On the Physiocrats, see especially Lalor, *Cyclopedia of Political Economy*, Art. "Physiocrats"; Blanqui, *History of Political Economy*, ch. 32; Ingram, *History of Political Economy*, ch. 5.

sary so far as politics went, was a necessary evil, and that in the economic sphere every individual should be allowed his natural rights to labor when, where, and as he chose, and to enjoy the fruits of his labor subject to no indirect tax of any description. Monopolies and special privileges were not to be thought of.

With their technical teaching as to natural laws governing wages and profits, with their belief in a "natural value" for all commodities, with the elaborate exposition of the increase of the "net product" as the great desideratum in national economy—with all these, now, like other of their doctrines, hardly more than a part of the archæology of economic science, we need not concern ourselves. But one must observe that in their general principles lay one source of an irrepressible conflict. Economic France was actually a mass of privilege, and to embody the teaching of the Physiocrat in law meant the destruction of privilege. And this was what Turgot, the greatest of the school, actually did while intendant at Limoges, and attempted to do during the few months he was minister of finance, with what success will appear presently.

But while the Physiocrats were seeking soberly to reform the scandalous economic condition of the nation, they were quite unnoticed in comparison with the Philosophers, whose chief virtues were abstract generalizations and an ability to appeal to elemental principles and passions.

Here again there is the revolt against the iniquity of privilege. The entire philosophy of the eighteenth century, in France and out of France—as witness the

American Declaration of Independence—is concerned with rights—*natural rights*. Privilege and inequality—these were the ineradicable traits of the Old Régime. Equality of rights and the destruction of all authority not based on nature—these are the core of the teachings of Voltaire, the Encyclopedists, and Rousseau.

Obnoxious from its insincerity and pretensions, the church was the first representative of privilege and unnatural authority to provoke attack, and its most able, though by no means bitterest critic, was François Marie Arouet, better known from his assumed name, Voltaire.[1]

Voltaire was born February 20, 1694. He received an education at a Jesuit college, and later became the secretary of the French ambassador at the Hague. He lost this position because of a love affair, conducted, it almost seems, as a sort of experiment in philanthropy. Returning to France, he attempted to study law, but was held by the authorities to have published a poem against the Jesuits, and was thrown into the Bastile. Then he turned to literature, and composed the drama of *Œdipe*, though for lack of pen and ink it was not written until his release. Once free, he composed the *Henriade*, and mingled in the most brilliant society of the day. He became involved in a quarrel with a member of the Rohan family, who, finding the young poet more than his match in repartee, inveigled him from a reception into the street, where he was thoroughly beaten by lackeys. Voltaire

[1] On Voltaire, see Desnoiresterres, *Voltaire et la Societe Française au XVIIIe Siècle;* Morley, *Voltaire;* Flint, *Philosophy of History*, 289-304; McCarthy, *French Revolution*, I, 40-56; Carlyle, *Essays* (Am. ed.), II, 5-78; Lévy-Bruhl, *History of Modern Philosophy in France*, ch. 6.

rushed to a fencing-master, and after a month's practice, challenged the noble. Rohan refused to fight, and through family influence had Voltaire again thrown into the Bastile. After an imprisonment of six months, however, he was released, and immediately went to England. There he lived three years in closest touch with the English philosophers, most of whom, it will be recalled, were deists.

This sojourn in England was the turning-point in Voltaire's life. He had no love for a church and a nobility that had twice imprisoned him without trial, and on his return to the continent he threw himself passionately into a crusade against both, but especially against the former. From this time till his death, whether living with that most mathematical woman, Madame du Châtelet, or visiting and quarreling with Frederick II. of Prussia, or enjoying the admiration—and fear—of all Europe in his retreat at Ferney, Voltaire was the most influential man of his age. His talent was almost universal. He was a good philosopher, a good scientist, a good historian, and a poet that barely missed being immortal. Nothing was foreign to his restless mind. One minute he is urging that dead people should be buried outside cities; at another he is an enthusiast for vaccination; now he writes volumes on physics; now he is experimenting with light; now he writes a history of Louis XIV. or Charles XII. of Sweden, whose charm men cannot yet escape; now he is a poet and a dramatist, who lives down a generation of hatred and dies, all but literally, of glory. But in all he is a master of a satire and sarcasm that sting like acid; and in philosophy,

history, science, poetry, theology, politics, satire, is he the incarnation of the spirit of a century that played at omniscience and laughed at belief in omniscience.

He was no atheist; rather he was a deist. "If there were no God, we should have to create one," he said; and at Ferney he erected a little chapel bearing this inscription, *Deo erexit Voltaire.* And God must be just and intelligent. "I had rather," he says in *Candide*, "worship a limited than a wicked God. I cannot possibly offend him when I say: 'Thou hast done all that a powerful, kind, and wise being could do. It is not thy fault if thy works cannot be as good and perfect as thou art." Yet at the same time so completely was he under the influence of his age's reaction against the church that he was capable of appreciating religion only in the same proportion as it was not characteristically Christian. Nor is it quite true that, as Carlyle says, the doctrine of the "plenary inspiration of the Scriptures is the single wall against which, through long years, and with innumerable battering-rams and catapults and popguns, he unweariedly battered."[1] It is rather against the arrogant infallibility of the church of his day, whether Roman or Protestant; its insistence to the extent of persecution upon the necessity of accepting its doctrines; its hostility to free thought; its asceticism; its hypocrisy. Being naturally without veneration, and inimitable in his power of satire, in giving vent to this hatred he probably did more than any man of his time to break down the foundations of

[1] Carlyle, *Essays*, II (Am. ed.), 66.

regard for religious authority that also support regard for authority in general. Yet however much he sought to rid men's minds of superstition; however much—as in the case of the unjustly imprisoned heretic, Calas—he proved himself the champion of religious liberty; however much his life exhibited charity—it is hard for his most ardent admirer to construct from his writings a positive system of thought in any department, and least of all in politics. Here he is in sharpest contrast to his radicalism in theology. A man without land, he maintained, had no more right to have a share in government than a clerk had the right to manage his employer's business. But none the less, Voltaire must be credited with having done more than any other man of his day to destroy the intellectual inertia in France that made abuse possible. If the Reformation had its Erasmus as well as its Luther, so the Revolution had its Voltaire as well as its Mirabeau.

But Voltaire was to be outdone as the destroyer of the bases of ecclesiastical and political authority. In 1727 Robert Chambers published, in England, the first genuine encyclopedia, and Denis Diderot was employed to edit the French translation of the work.[1] Diderot was already famous in the literary world, both for his brilliant falsifications and for his literary style, and in undertaking the task he was not content merely to reproduce the English work. Associating with himself as a co-worker D'Alembert, and enlisting the aid of nearly every literary man in France, he set

[1] On the Encyclopedists, see Morley, *Diderot and the Encyclopedists;* Lowell, *Eve of French Revolution*, chs. 16, 17; Taine, *Ancient Régime*, 216-221; Lévy-Bruhl, *History of Modern Philosophy in France*, ch. 7.

about the enormous task of issuing a work that, in his own words, should "bring together all that had been discovered in science, what was known of the productions of the globe, the details of the arts which men have invented, the principles of morals, those of legislation, the laws which govern society, the metaphysics of language and the rules of grammar, the analysis of our faculties, and even the history of our opinions." The first volume appeared in 1751, and the second in January, 1752. A month later the work was suppressed by the Council as dangerous to royal authority and religion. None the less, the publication was continued, until in 1757 the work had reached the end of the letter G. Then, because of a most radical book of Helvetius, one of the leading Encyclopedists, the storm broke out again, and it was not until 1765 that the remaining volumes were delivered to subscribers.[1]

The philosophical opinions contained in the Encyclopedia itself are by no means conservative, as its history may very well suggest, but it gave its name to the group of scholars and philosophers most intimately concerned in its production, and the philosophical and political opinions expressed in other works of these Encyclopedists were radical in the extreme. In religion they did not stop with the deism of Voltaire, plead with them though he might, but they attacked not only Christianity, but immortality and God as well. If, according to Voltaire, God wound up the universe like a clock, and then from

[1] In 1772, eleven volumes of plates appeared; in 1776, four supplementary volumes of text; in 1777, a supplementary volume of plates; in 1780, a table of contents in two volumes. The work passed through many editions.

unknown space watched it go, according to Diderot, D'Alembert, Helvetius, Holbach, and their confrères there never was any God, and the universe wound up itself. In politics they were quite as extreme. As for morality, Diderot will have none of such conventions as marriage, and champions the most extreme of free-love doctrines. He finds in the "natural," the uncivilized man the ideal being, and believes that he continues to live in every person. To give this "natural man" free scope was the ideal of the Encyclopedist school. Government was "a mere handful of knaves" who impose their yoke upon men. "We see," they said, "on the face of the globe only incapable, unjust sovereigns, enervated by luxury, corrupted by flattery, depraved through unpunished license, and without talent, morals, or good qualities."

And all this philosophical madness was set forth with such a wealth of learning and such a delightful self-assurance that the philosophers of France and the brillant talkers of the salons were soon atheists and anarchists of the most fashionable sort.

This doctrine of the "natural man" brings us face to face with a character of most contradictory traits, but of immense importance, Jean Jacques Rousseau.[1]

Rousseau was born in Geneva, June 28, 1712. His father was a man of little kindness, and when his

[1] The literature upon Rousseau is voluminous. The best in French is by Saint Marc Girardin and the best in English by Morley. Lowell, *Eve of the French Revolution*, contains two admirable chapters, 18, 19; McCarthy, *French Revolution*, I, ch. 5, contains much interesting material. His general philosophy of history is well treated in Flint, *Philosophy of History*, 305-314; his political views, by Ritchie, *Natural Rights*, ch. 3, as well as by most writers on politics. See, for instance, Woolsey, *Political Science*, I; Schlosser, *History of the Eighteenth Century*, I, 285-314. A good English translation of the *Contrat Social* is that by Tozer (1895). See further, Brunetière, *History of French Literature*, ch. 3; Lévy-Bruhl, *History of Modern Philosophy in France*, ch. 8.

son was but a boy deserted him after having bound him over to a cruel master. Rousseau fled from the abuse to which he was subjected, and after a variety of vicissitudes in low life, all of which he tells with sentimental frankness in his *Confessions*, he finally became an inmate of the house of a lady of rather accommodating morals, who was to play no small rôle in his life, Madame de Warens. After ten or a dozen years, being unable to endure the presence of a rival lover in the singular family circle, Rousseau went to Paris. There, now a man of thirty, he found the back doors—so to speak—of the literary world open to him, though he produced little or nothing for several years. In the meantime he copied music and collected plants for botanists, and thus supported himself and an illiterate maidservant, Thérèse Levasseur, by whom he had five children, each of whom he promptly sent to the foundling asylum.[1] When thirty-seven years of age, he tells us in the *Confessions*,[2] he lay down one hot day under a tree and happened to read in a newspaper that the Academy of Dijon offered a prize for the best essay upon the question, "Whether the Progress of the Arts and Sciences has tended to corrupt or improve morals?" Whereupon he wept for half an hour, then went home, wrote an essay to establish the negative answer, won the prize—and the "Gospel of Jean Jacques" had been born! Civilization he knew to be a curse, and the natural man the ideal of life.

[1] It was characteristic of Rousseau to make a sentimental reference to this fact in the first book of *Emile*. He apparently thought that he had not sufficient courage or ability to give practically that education the theory of which he described with so much charm. See further, Morley, *Rousseau*, I, 119–129.

[2] Part ii, bk. 8.

It was nothing new. Philosophers for hundreds of years had taught the beauty of nature and the natural man; but Rousseau made the teaching dynamic in all departments of social life.

The works with which he accomplished this end were *On the Inequality among Men*, published in 1753; the *New Héloïse*, published in 1759; the *Social Contract*, published in 1761; and *Emile*, in 1762. It is hard to systematize their teachings, so miscellaneous and often—even in the case of his teaching as to civilization itself—so conflicting are they. There is practically nothing in the whole range of human experience upon which he does not give advice. Gardens, babies with colic, music, property, morals, swaddling-clothes, the proper shade-trees, illicit love, music, God, nursing mothers, all alike are considered. But back of the rambling discussions of his undoubted genius we can discover one fundamental passion—to rationalize the condition of humanity; to break down its artificial civilization, its unjust governments, and to turn men back to nature. Now this is something more than the negation of Voltaire and the Encyclopedists. Rousseau was not an iconoclast; his temper of mind was intensely constructive. And what is more, he was in earnest; and by his insistent cry of "Back to Nature!" he made a new era.

Just what Rousseau meant by Nature and the natural man is somewhat hard to say. Although he idealizes the American Indians, he distinctly says that the "natural" condition never existed on the earth;[1] and even if this be a purely formal concession to an

[1] In his essay *On the Inequality among Men.*

orthodox censor of the press, he knows nothing about primitive men to justify the ideal. In fact, all his "natural" men are pure imaginations—first cousins to the "economic" men of political economy. Yet this fact made no difference in the influence of his writings. Real or unreal, back to nature men tried to go.

In some directions the cry led to rational improvement. Rousseau became the founder of a sort of cult among the fashionable and intellectual classes. His *New Héloïse*, for instance, could not be bought, so great was the demand, and each volume was let out at twelve sous an hour. Women of fashion sat up all night to read it. And it was more than a mere dissipation; it all but remade social ideals. Mothers who had forgotten they had babies began to nurse them; boys and girls who had been laced and powdered and taught gallantry ran out to play. Frenchmen came to love natural landscapes, and to grow suspicious of their beautifully regular gardens with their trees cut into impossible shapes. The world of fashion, even, liked to play at being *au naturel*, and the queen herself had little farmhouses built in the great park of Versailles, and there, in the very same marble-lined dairy of Petit Trianon which we visit to-day, she made butter and made believe she was a farmer's wife. Louis, too, since all men ought to learn a trade against a coming revolution,[1] practiced locksmithing, and loved to make strong-boxes—one of which was to bring him his death a few years later, when natural rights were being enjoyed. To this day education feels the influence of Rousseau's educational insight, for Pestalozzi

[1] *Emile*, bk. iii.

was his pedagogical son, and every mother who sends her child to a kindergarten is all unwittingly a fellow-scholar with Froebel in the school of *Emile*.[1]

But even more influential and radical was the political philosophy of Rousseau. Utterly ignorant of the facts given modern scholars by anthropology and comparative politics, in his political theories Rousseau was wholly at the mercy of classical antiquity and *a priori* theory. Never having seen a "natural" man, he constructed him as he saw fit. And the result was a savage who was also a saint, for "coming from the hand of the Author of all things, everything is good."[2] His saintliness indeed vanished, but only because he had become less a savage and had devised private property in land. Civilization was, therefore, a curse, and the wise man's ambition would be to free himself from its destructive influences.

This in the two Dijon essays. In the *Social Contract* he quite abandons this position, leaves his savages enjoying the thin air of theory, and seeks with sober sense to discover the real basis upon which the modern state may safely rest. His search is no longer for a "natural man," but for practicable liberty and equality—the two virtues most prominent by their absence in the France of his day. Nor does he any longer regard private property in land as evil; it is rather assumed as a fundamental fact in society. Even his equality is equality before the law.

[1] The *New Héloïse* so affected Thiébault (*Memoirs*, I, 37) that when he reached St. Preux's last letter, he was "no longer weeping, but shrieking and howling like a wild animal." He dared not read any more of the book for a week, and then only a half or quarter of a page at a sitting.

[2] *Emile*, bk. i.

But one thing he still holds: "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains." Freedom and equality were, he held, to be gained by the recognition of the—purely imaginary—fact that the state is the outcome of a compact between men, in which each "places in common his person and his whole power under the supreme direction of the general will." This corporate body thus formed constituted the true sovereign. Each citizen is a member of the sovereign. The will of this sovereign people is not only absolute, it is, though not always wise, always right. It therefore must constitute the law, and if it allowed the king to reign, it would be only that he might prevent the clashing of individual interests. This is almost the only concession Rousseau makes to the actual facts of political history.

When he passes on to carry out this general political conception into actual life, his thought of necessity grew thoroughly *a priori*. "What is the government?" he asks. "An intermediate body established between the subjects and the sovereign for their mutual correspondence, charged with the execution of the laws and with the maintenance of liberty, both civic and political."[1] As the sovereign and the subjects would be, according to his philosophy, the same people, government cannot be a distinct political entity. It is at this point the revolutionary implication is unavoidable. Strictly speaking, Rousseau recognizes no contract between subjects and rulers. The latter are simply organs of the people itself, and may be dismissed at any moment. "It is con-

[1] *Social Contract*, bk. iii, ch. 1.

trary," says Rousseau, "to the nature of the body politic for the sovereign to impose upon itself a law which it can never change." Therefore — though Rousseau hardly dares put it quite so distinctly— therefore, a sovereign people may depose its servant king.

But it must be remembered that Rousseau cared nothing for what we call a republic. He seems even sometimes to prefer an elective aristocracy. But such an aristocracy would be only the servants of the people. Representative government he would not have; meetings should be held frequently, in which every citizen should vote on every question, for the "general will" alone is right.[1] Further, by pushing his theory of the infallibility of majorities and the subsequent subjection of the individual to the community, Rousseau at the same time that he preached this absolute democracy, preached — although he denied it — a democratic despotism. "As nature gives each man," says he, "absolute power over his own limbs, so the social contract gives the body politic absolute power over its members and makes it the master of their possessions." There are to be, according to Rousseau, no checks upon this sovereign people except compulsory religion. The sovereign people should banish all those who say there is no salvation outside the church, and all those who say there is no God.

In the light of modern political history it is not difficult to see the weakness in this theory of Rous-

[1] Probably Rousseau was influenced in this by his experience with the city democracies of Switzerland.

seau. There never was any such compact between men, and civilization is not a curse, but a perpetuation of what in the main must be regarded as blessings. Popular sovereignty as he conceived of it is a chimera and a seductive fallacy. His demand that all citizens should take part in all deliberations would result either, as Voltaire prophesied, in anarchy, or as the Revolution demonstrated, in the tyranny of the mob and the club. His disregard of minorities and his relentless subjection of the individual to the sovereign is not liberty. Indeed, his entire philosophy logically would end not in liberty, but in equality under a new sort of despotism. But after all this is admitted, there remains one magnificent thought—the rationality of society. And a rational society could be trusted to govern itself.

For a country in the condition of France this conception, if once universally joined with social discontent, meant reform or revolution. That he succeeded in getting this great principle diffused throughout France, and indeed in the works of others throughout the world, gave his great significance to Rousseau. But he has yet a more specific importance. Not only was he a philosophical leaven, but to many he was an all but inspired prophet. Men tried to put his entire political gospel into operation—and its evangelists were Robespierre and St. Just, and its millenium was the Terror.

One thing more, however, must be said. This great intellectual activity is not to be interpreted as arguing intellectual freedom in France. Madame de Staël was correct when she declared that the liberty

of thought that characterizes the last days of an absolutism are evidence not of tolerance, but of weakness. In nothing was this weakness more apparent than in the attempts made to limit the freedom of the press. Few works of any importance failed to bring their authors into trouble. "An author or a bookseller was forced to be as careful as a kidnaper of coolies or the captain of a slaver would be in our own time. He had to steer clear of the court, of the parliament, of Jansenists, of Jesuits, of the mistresses of the king and the minister, of the friends of the mistresses, and above all, of that organized hierarchy of ignorance and oppression in all times and places when they raise their masked heads—the bishops and ecclesiastics of every sort and condition."[1] The Parlement of Paris and the other sovereign courts, the court of the Châtelet, even an ordinary tribunal of justice, had the right to burn publicly any writing judged to be contrary to religion, morals, or the state, and nearly every great work of the eighteenth century shared this fate.[2] The arrest of the authors, printers, dealers, as well as the confiscation of all discoverable copies, followed whenever possible,[3] and there were few famous French authors in the century who did not taste the bitterness of the Bastile or of exile. It is this fact that gives a certain moral worth to even the worst of the literature of

[1] Morley, *Rousseau*, II, 56; see also his *Diderot*, ch. 6.

[2] It is said, however, that the hangman sometimes threw waste-paper into the fire instead of the books, and that these latter were afterward found in the library of the judge!

[3] For details, see Monin, *L'Etat de Paris en 1789*, 467-478; Rocquain, *L'Esprit revolutionnaire avant la Révolution*, 491-535, gives a list of works condemned from 1715-1789.

the period. If men wrote recklessly, they also wrote bravely. In the case of the philosophers this must excuse much exaggerated misunderstanding of religion and morals. They were in earnest and they were in danger, and in some strange way one is thus forced to give Voltaire and Diderot, D'Alembert and Rousseau some of the credit we give the martyrs of the church they attacked.

To trace the process by which this struggle against intellectual tyranny and this extravagant love for abstract politics became united with economic and political discontent, and so produced a new French spirit, is the work of another chapter.

General References to English Literature.—On the Old Régime, the most brilliant work is that of Taine, *The Ancient Régime*, but there are others of great value: De Tocqueville, *France before the Revolution of 1789;* Arthur Young, *Travels in France during the Years 1787-9;* Lowell, *The Eve of the French Revolution;* Dabney, *The Causes of the French Revolution;* Kingsley, *The Ancient Régime;* Rocquain, *The Revolutionary Spirit.* Briefer accounts will be found in Louis Blanc, *History of the French Revolution*, Introduction; Allison, *History of Europe*, X, First Series, I, 1 60; Buckle, *History of Civilization*, I, chs. 8 14; McCarthy, *French Revolution*, I, chs. 1–14; Watson, *The Story of France*, I, chs. 37–39.

Among memoirs, those of Madame Campan and of Baron Besenval are especially full of descriptions of the life at Versailles. The biography of *Marie Antoinette*, by Saint-Armand, is interesting, but hardly unprejudiced. The same can be said of Mason, *The Women of the French Salons.* Much valuable historical material is also contained in the delightful novel of Erckmann-Chatrian, *The States General*, to a less degree in the stories of Dumas.

# PART II

## THE BEGINNINGS OF THE REVOLUTION

## CHAPTER VI

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT UNDER LOUIS XV.

I. Revolutions the Result of Spiritual Forces. II. The Struggle for Religious Freedom. III. The Parlement of Paris and Its Struggle with Louis XV. over the Bull *Unigenitus*. IV. The Crisis of 1753-4. V. The New Influence of Philosophy. VI. The *Coup d'Etat* of 1771. VII. The Liberal Spirit in the Various Classes of France: 1. The Nobles; 2. The Clergy; 3. The Masses of the City and the Provincials. VIII. The Moral Weakness of the New Spirit. IX. Its Universality.

The difference between a revolt and a revolution in the last analysis is a question of success. If a revolt is unable to destroy existing constitutional forms, it is a political crime, and its leaders are punished as traitors. If, however, it is able to bring about constitutional change, it becomes itself master of the state and its sympathizers become the government. Then it is properly called a revolution.[1] A comparison of pre-revolutionary epochs, however, makes this statement mean either too much or too

[1] The most important work upon this subject is, perhaps, Lombroso, *La Crime politique et la Revolution*, although few would probably assent to some of the author's statements as to the physical conditions most potent in inducing social upheavals.

little. The success of any uprising against an existing government which is of enough significance to warrant being called a revolution is something more than a triumph of mere physical force. It is an evidence of life, a spiritual movement—the result of a struggle of men with ideals against men with legalized privileges. To understand it one must look into the heart of an entire people as well as upon the deeds of some few desperate men. And therefore one must expect to find that dreams of betterment and disgust at abuses which leap forth at some moment to remake constitutions are the children of long pedigrees. A revolution no more than a state is born in a day, and the Revolution in France was no more the outgrowth of sudden passion than it was of mere misery. It was the product of a century's discontent rationalized and made constructive by philosophy.

As regards political discontent, the development of the revolutionary spirit in France may be traced from the days of the Regency, but even then its chief element was a heritage from the last bigoted days of Louis XIV. The germ of revolution was the purely ecclesiastical struggle for religious liberty between two parties of the Roman Church, the Ultramontanes and the Jansenists. Into the details of this controversy as it raged over the questions of papal infallibility, Augustinianism, Pelagianism, divine grace, and righteousness of works, it is quite unnecessary to enter. But it is indispensable to note that in 1713 the Jesuits procured from Pope Clement XI. the bull *Unigenitus*, by which one hundred and one of the Jansenist positions were pronounced heretical and

proscribed. February 14, 1714, its provisions were registered by the Parlement of Paris as a law of the nation. Church and state grew thus united in opposition to free thought. Although the death of Louis XIV. prevented the enforcement of the new law, throughout the ministry of Fleury persistent efforts were made to crush the Jansenists by the use of the powers of the state, and the "constitution" of the bull became the issue of a generation's constitutional struggles. In 1730 Fleury forced through the Parlement or High Court of Paris a law making it obligatory upon all ecclesiastics to accept the bull.[1] A few of the higher clergy, many of the lower clergy, the magistrates, the *bourgeoisie*, the people at large, were at one in their hostility to the high-handed measures of the court. The question became political. The Parlement of Paris resisted to the very limit of obedience, but to no purpose. Its president on wishing to speak was told by the king to keep quiet—"*Taisez-vous.*" Several members of the Parlement were exiled, and in 1732 its powers were distinctly decreased. The people of Paris, as well as of all France, who—not quite correctly—saw in the Parlement the representative of the nation, became deeply involved in the struggle, now no longer a question of creed, but of the powers of Parlement, the one means of checking absolutism.

[1] The Parlements were judicial, not legislative, bodies. The importance of the Parlement of Paris was great, since no decree of the king could become a law until the Parlement had formally registered it. Its only power of resistance lay in refusal to register, but even in such a case the king could force it to do his will or exile it if it still was disobedient. On the Parlements, see Desmazes, *Le Parlement de Paris;* Bastard d'Estang, *Les Parlements de France.* A summary of the history of the Parlement of Paris is in Stephens, *French Revolution*, I, 4, 5.

The succession of wars in which France became involved during the second quarter of the eighteenth century quieted domestic disputes, but at each lull in the military storm the effort of Fleury to crush the Jansenist party was renewed, but always with an increase of opposition on the part of the Parlement of Paris. The reverses of the French arms in the wars of the Austrian succession were not sufficient to arouse Louis XV. to the necessity of political reform, and the state remained under the astonishing leadership of the king's mistresses and Cardinal Fleury. Thought grew more restrained, and in 1742 an order of the Council destroyed the liberty of the press and made it a crime to have in one's possession books "injurious to good morals."

The death of Fleury in 1743, and the consequent assumption of the responsibilities of royalty by Louis XV., brought little relief. War continued, and the consequent drafting of troops furnished the occasion of seditious outbreaks in the workingmen's faubourg (or ward) in Paris, St. Antoine, which was later to be so puissant in affairs of state. D'Argenson wrote in 1743, "Revolution is certain in the state." But he was mistaken. France had not yet been divorced from a regard for ancient authorities or concentrated on elemental justice. Discontent in itself is incapable of producing a revolution, and when in the next year Louis XV. announced that he would be at once a better king and a better man, all evidences of discontent were lost in national rejoicing. Ultramontanism in the Council was repressed, a champion of toleration, D'Argenson, was put in charge of for-

eign affairs. Literature, instead of being the object of government suspicion, was befriended; and even Voltaire, in 1746, was authorized by Louis XV. to present himself as a candidate for membership in the Academy. The church at the same time ceased from religious persecution.

But the quiet was of but short duration, and absolutism again soon exerted itself in restrictions. The Parlement was told that the bull *Unigenitus* contained "the law of church and state," and a vote of Parlement to the contrary was annulled by an order of the Council of State. The continuance of war not only brought desolation to the nation, but new taxes were imperative. Parlement, as far as it dared, remonstrated with the king, but to no purpose. Popular discontent grew marked. In vain the government gave great fêtes to the people at the establishment of peace. No one shouted *Vive le roi!* and the crowd burned one of the triumphal arches. Peace itself brought new complaints, for the government broke its promises of remitting certain war taxes.

The appearance of Montesquieu's great work upon the *Spirit of the Laws* drew public attention to fundamental political principles, and Parlement after Parlement refused to sanction the continued collection of the war tax of *dixième*, or ten per cent.[1] Government not choosing to yield all at once, attempted to substitute a tax of *vingtième*, or five per cent. The Parlement of Paris at first refused to register the law, but later did so, though entering upon their records the state-

[1] They were those of Bordeaux, Aix, Pau, and Toulouse. It is to be noticed that thus early the provincial Parlements dare oppose the royal will.

ment that they did so only at "the express command of the king."

Religious persecution broke out again at the same time, and France was in consequence everywhere swept by fierce hostility to the Ultramontane party. At the same time all classes united in open criticism of the king's life and administration. Church and state, thus united in disregard of the rights of the people, were henceforth to be equally the object of attack. Everywhere there was agitation, and a crisis was reached in 1752-54. A certain Ultramontane priest had refused to give the last sacrament to a Jansenist priest, Le Mère. The latter complained to the Parlement of Paris. That body ordered the Ultramontane to perform the proper offices to the dying man. The Royal Council promptly annulled the decree, and said it would attend to the matter itself. As a result, Le Mère died without the sacraments. Paris was thrown into the most extravagant excitement, and Parlement ordered the arrest of the offending priest. The king annulled this decree as well. Parlement replied by a decree forbidding the clergy to enforce the decrees of the bull *Unigenitus* against heretics. The Archbishop of Paris ordered forty hours' prayer "against the dangers threatening the faith," and appealed to the king. The public replied with numerous pamphlets. Parlement grew increasingly rebellious, and at last, on April 8, 1753, refused flatly, under penalty of incurring the royal disfavor, to register certain decrees enforcing obedience to the *Unigenitus* constitution. And thereupon, April 9th, it was exiled to Pontoise,

and later to Soissons. Instantly it became more than ever a popular idol. Everywhere were heard and read, "Long live the Parlement! Death to the king and the bishops!" Opposition on the part of the provincial Parlements was unified, and under the direction of the exiled Parlement of Paris they began to solidify a universal opposition to church and state. Had the influence of the philosophers been as great in 1754 as in 1789, it is difficult to see why the Revolution should not have then broken out.[1]

The reason that the revolution did not break out in 1754, according to Rousseau, was the extraordinary excitement produced by his book upon French music,[2] and according to Grimm, the arrival in Paris of the Italian actor Manelli! Possibly each did something to relieve the tension of the Parisian mind, but the real explanation is something very different: The government became alarmed, and yielded. Parlement was recalled; the Ultramontane party was defeated, and recalcitrant archbishops and bishops were in turn sent into exile. It was a revelation of the possibilities of persistent and united opposition which France could not easily forget. But the national rejoicing was short-lived. Louis XV. was sadly in need of money, and made concessions again

[1] D'Argenson, writing in May, 1753, expressly states the opposition to the religion was not due to "the English philosophy," but to hatred against the priests. In June, 1754, he writes, "The revolution is more to be feared than ever. If it is to come to Paris, it will commence by the killing of priests in the streets." Rocquain, *L'Esprit Revolutionnaire*, 170, 179. Rocquain (180, 181) goes on to show the advantages which would have accrued to France had the revolution come at this time rather than in 1789. And there can be little doubt that the generation which elapsed between the two crises did much to bring destructive rather than reformatory forces to the front. In addition, Louis XV. would never have been the vacillating ruler his grandson proved to be.

[2] *Confessions*, pt. ii, bk. 8.

to the clergy in return for a promise of a grant of funds. This sudden change in the royal policy was probably due to the influence of Madame de Pompadour, who by this time was the most influential person in France.

In December, 1756, the king held a *lit de justice*,[1] in which Parlement was forced to register royal decrees that practically annihilated its own powers. All the excitement of two years previous was again in evidence, and again D'Argenson feared revolution. The *lit de justice* seemed to some "the last sigh of the dying royalty." More apprehensive souls thought that "Europe was threatened by a sinister revolution."

Again superficial judgments showed themselves false, for the attempted assassination of Louis XV. by the wretched Damien, in January, 1757, led the government to take extreme measures. Members of different Parlements were banished, and even thrown into prison; leaders of both sides of the warring theological parties were also banished; troops were made ready, and a new law was promulgated punishing with death the publication of writings dangerous to the authority of church or state. These severe measures restrained popular feeling, but it broke out with renewed bitterness after the defeat of the French at Rosbach (1757), and the attempt to levy an additional tax in the shape of a "gift" upon all towns and villages in the nation. One of the numerous placards of the day maintained that three

[1] This term denotes a session of the Parlement held by the king in person, in which all debate was forbidden and the Parlement was forced to register a law under penalty of severe punishment.

hundred thousand men, under a leader, were ready to take arms in support of a revolt.

All this developing spirit of revolt, it should be recalled, had as yet been practically untouched by philosophy. So far is it from being true that Voltaire and Rousseau originated the Revolution. But discontent is neither unifying nor constructive. A nation must have an issue and an ideal if it is to be regenerate. It is therefore of the first importance to discover that just at this time the gathering opposition to historical authority should have found its theoretical justification in a philosophy at once destructive and constructive. Under its influence, the spirit of discontent entered upon a new stage—it became truly revolutionary. It now had those universal watchwords so necessary for a popular movement; it had its philosophical weapons with which to attack church, state, and privilege alike; every year it had suggested to it new ideals of political and social reconstruction. After 1765[1] it was but a question of time before the results of this new spirit should appear. By 1771 the government was in despair. The recalcitrant Parlement of Paris, supported by popular opinion and the philosophy of the salons, could be neither cajoled nor threatened into doing the king's will. The church could give no aid, for the questions now under discussion had ceased to be ecclesiastical, and were purely civil, and the Jesuits had been suppressed by the Pompadour. At last, January 20, 1771, under the inspiration of the

[1]It is worth remembering that it was also at just this time that the American colonies entered upon that course of action that led to the American Revolution.

prime minister, Maupeou, Louis XV. executed a *coup d'état.* The members of Parlement were exiled, their property confiscated, and the Parlement itself completely suppressed. Before the year was out the provincial Parlements were also suppressed and their functions assumed by six new courts.

It would be historically incorrect to think of the Parlement of Paris, or the Parlements of other sections of France, as composed of pure-minded patriots. So far from being anything like the English Parliament, they had no true legislative powers. Their members belonged to the privileged classes, and wished nothing less than reform. As corporate bodies they were without exception corrupt and often cruel. Their members purchased their positions, and used them as served their ends best. Their very opposition to the king had been largely inspired by their determination to maintain their own privileges. But corrupt as it was, the Parlement of Paris in withstanding the king had become the mouthpiece of discontent. Now that it was abolished, there was practically no body to oppose royal encroachments. So long as Louis XV. lived, it is true, resistance was reduced to riotings and pamphlets, but public opinion grew daily more determined to have some sort of expression of the national wishes. It was suggested that the States General—the one national body—should be recalled from the grave to which Louis XIII. had sent it in 1614. But the old king set himself fiercely against the proposal. "If my own brother were to make the suggestion to me," he said once, in substance, "I would not wait twenty-four hours before executing him,"

and he allowed his minister Maupeou to crush every corporate body that in any way dared oppose the royal will. But such severity could not endure, and among the first acts of Louis XVI. was the reinstatement of the suppressed Parlements, only to find that punishment had but increased their capacity for opposition — in his reign, unfortunately, to proposed reforms rather than to the encroachments of the sovereign.

The leaven of idealism was not to work only among hard-pressed lawyers and judges. The great enemy of the philosophers during the last days of Louis XV. was Siguier, *advocat général*, and his apprehensions furnish a striking testimony to the extent of their influence. "The philosophers," he says, "have set themselves up as teachers of the human race. Liberty of thought is their cry, and this cry has made itself heard from one end of the world to the other. With one hand they have attempted to shake the throne; with the other they have wished to overthrow the altars. Kingdoms have felt their ancient foundations totter, and the nations, astonished at seeing their principles annihilated, have asked by what fate they had become so different from themselves. In their numberless writings the philosophers have spread abroad the poison of unbelief; eloquence, poetry, history, romance, even dictionaries have been infected. Scarcely have their writings been published in the capital, when they spread like a torrent in the provinces. The contagion has penetrated into the workshops, and even into the huts of the peasants."[1]

As for the nobility, it is noteworthy that there were

[1] Rocquain, *L'Esprit Révolutionnaire*, 278.

many who were under the influence of the ideals of the philosophers. Especially was this true of the old aristocracy—that "of the sword"—in which were numbered men like de La Fayette, d'Aiguillon, de Noailles, the two brothers de Lameth, de Montmorency, de La Rochefoucauld, together with many of the younger noblesse. The *cahiers* which were presented by the Second Estate in 1789 show no small influence of liberal thought. Thus at Paris the nobles direct their representatives to the States General to see to it that the new body draws up "an explicit declaration of the rights which belong to all men."[1] The nobles of Clermont in Beauvoisis, Mantes, and Menton do the same. The nobility of the *bailliage* of Tours formally declared that they were "men and citizens before being nobles," and declared that they would resign all privileges in the matter of taxation. To the meeting of the electors of the Third Estate in Berry, the Comte de Buzançois declared, "We are all brothers, and are anxious to share your burdens." The nobles of Rheims petitioned the king to order the demolition of the Bastile.

These liberal nobles, however, constituted only a hopeful minority of their order, and few even of them were accustomed to political life, and were thus quite incapable of perceiving the practical results of their theories. Philosophy was for them, as has been said, "confined to the limits of speculation, and never seeking, even in its boldest flights, anything beyond a calm intellectual exercise."[2] The only exception

[1] Chassin, *Cahiers, 1789*, II, 15.

[2] Morellet, *Memoires*, I, 139; quoted by Taine, *Ancient Règime*, 279, n.

of importance to this statement lies within the sphere of sentiment. Women of quality dined with the grocer-woman who had been chiefly instrumental in bringing about the release of Latude, a wretch who had been kept in prison thirty-five years for attempting a practical joke upon Madame de Pompadour. La Fayette disobeyed the order of the court, bought a frigate, and went to aid the colonies of America in their struggle for the "natural rights" set forth in the Declaration of Independence. In some regions the most influential men defended the peasant against the tax-collector, and a governor of one province delivered a course on bread-making. When these enthusiasts went further and preached doctrines of natural rights to the masses, results could not fail to be revolutionary. In truth the theorists of the eighteenth century were summoning a dangerous genius when they undertook to inspire restless, ignorant, ill-regulated minds with dreams of liberty. Voltaire put the matter to the Encyclopedists distinctly: "Philosophize between yourselves as much as you please. I fancy I hear dilettanti giving for their own pleasure a refined music; but take good care not to perform this concert before the ignorant, the brutal, the vulgar; they might break your instruments over your heads." It was this same sense of the danger attending the destructive philosophy of the day that led to Voltaire's other remark: "Atheism and fanaticism are two monsters which may tear society to pieces." But neither the Encyclopedists nor these philanthropic enemies of the privileges upon which they depended for their incomes saw the wisdom

of the observation, and the ferment was ever the greater.

Among the clergy, the abused curates and vicars, most of whom were Jansenist in sympathy, shared pretty generally in this renaissance of liberal sentiments, and among the higher clergy, strenuous for their rights as they were, there were some who were ready to assist their peasants to meet and overcome want. The Bishop of Castres directed his curates to see to it that potatoes are cultivated among their parishioners. The Archbishop of Paris gave a fortune to the hospital of the Hôtel Dieu. But the liberal clergy were far less doctrinaire in their chase after natural rights than were the liberals of other orders. The sense of need growing from actual contact with the poor, as well as a practical knowledge of the impossibility of educating them for reform, seems to have made the curates less enthusiastic for change. Ecclesiastics as a class are never very keen after novelties, and the French ecclesiastics of 1774-89 least of all.

Among the masses the same ideals were rapidly spreading. Discontent might well be permanent in a people oppressed like the peasants and artisans of France. The annals of the time are full of violence, of local revolts, riots, and protests. Philosophical teachings like Rousseau's found men waiting to receive them, or at least to read desirable contents into their general phrases. "Popular sovereignty" became everywhere the possession of the artisans and the masses of the cities, especially of Paris. The peasants, it is true, could not have fully shared in the

beautiful dreams of philosophy, but they began to feel that their discontent was being reinforced, and perhaps even quieted, by respectability. A poor woman in the neighborhood of Metz, in July, 1789, could tell Arthur Young that "something was to be done by some great folk for such poor ones as she, though she did not know who nor how."[1] At the best, however, their notions, with those of the populace of Paris, could have been but crude. Even the provincial middle class struck Arthur Young as stupid. Everybody he found talking, but heard from them—at least in Metz—not one word for which he "would give a straw." "Take the mass of mankind," he goes on to say, "and you have more sense in half an hour in England than in half a year in France."[2] But there is no evidence of any widespread determination on the part of the peasants to have revenge. They were ready to poach upon their lord's preserves, and if need be to kill a gamekeeper, but they seldom did any violence to the lord or his family. Their ignorance and brutality, however, were capable of almost any excess under excitement, and therein lay danger.

And here we meet one lamentable characteristic of the revolutionary spirit as it developed during the

[1] *Travels in France*, Bohn ed., 197.

[2] His journal abounds in similar comments. Thus, in August, 1789, he was in Moulins, a capital of a province and a considerable town, and found no newspaper in the leading café. "Here is a feature," he writes, "of national backwardness, ignorance, stupidity, and poverty. Could such a people as this ever have made a revolution or become free? Never in a thousand centuries. The enlightened mob of Paris, amid hundreds of papers and publications, have done the whole." A few days later in Clermont he writes: "I dined or supped four times at the table d'hôte, with from twenty to thirty merchants and tradesmen, officers, etc., and it is not easy to express the insignificance, the inanity of the conversation. The ignorance or the stupidity of these people must be absolutely incredible."

reign of Louis XV. If it was mutinous and brutal among the worst of the people, among the best people it was morally selfish, or at best morally neutral. The Christian ideal had been lost in the legitimate contempt for selfish and hypocritical ecclesiastics, and the constructive work of the philosophers had been based upon *rights*, not upon *duties*. The more one reads the literature of the times, the more is he convinced that so thoroughly had the French been debauched by state and church, noble and lawyer, that true moral ideals had largely disappeared, not only in the relations of the sexes, but in general theory. It is not only that everywhere was actual corruption; the much-vaunted "fraternity" had become only a high-sounding bit of rhetoric. Liberty may be gained by violence, but never fraternity; indeed, without the supplementary and regulating concept of love, the demand for liberty and equality can lead only to violence. No man of the nineteenth century has better understood the revolutionary spirit than Mazzini, and this is the judgment he passes upon the Revolution: "The error of the French Revolution was not the abolition of monarchy. It was the attempt to build up a republic upon the theory of rights, which, taken alone, inevitably leads to the acceptance of *les faits accomplis;* upon the sovereignty of the *Ego*, which leads sooner or later to the sovereignty of the strongest *Ego;* upon the essentially monarchical methods of extreme centralization, intolerance, and violence; upon that false definition of life given by men educated by monarchy and inspired by

a materialism which, having canceled God, has left itself nothing to worship but force."[1]

Before passing to the consideration of the succession of ill-managed and unsuccessful attempts under Louis XVI. to express this new spirit in the actual administration of the nation, one must recall the fact that this spirit of discontent and idealism was by no means confined to France. Indeed, it characterized the history of most of the western world during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. In France it went to greater extremes, because it was neither properly restrained nor directed, but philosophical sentimentalism was sweeping over all lands. Jefferson in America, Richardson in England, Goethe and Schiller in Germany, were but a few of its representatives. The secret order of the Illuminati endeavored to unite under mysterious vows all liberal spirits in Europe for the purpose of spreading revolutionary teachings. Politics were making discontent epidemic. The partition of Poland by Russia, Prussia, and Austria was the international counterpart of the suppression of Parlement by Louis XV.; yet, as it proved, it was not only an exhibition of irresponsible power, but also an unintentional step toward a formulation of international law. Joseph II. of Austria,[2] by his arbitrary suppression of the ancient rights of Hungary and Bohemia, awoke that national feeling among the Czech subjects of the Hapsburgs that to-day bids fair

[1] Essay on M. Renan and France. In the same essay, Mazzini has this fine statement: "Revolution is sacred and legitimate only when undertaken in the name of a new aim upon the path of progress, capable of ameliorating the moral, intellectual, and material condition of the whole people."

[2] See Schlosser, *Hist. Eighteenth Century*, V, 356, seq., Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution Française*, I, chs. 1, 2.

to dismember the Austrian Empire. The same monarch, in 1784, brought the Austrian Netherlands to the verge of revolt by abolishing the privileges of the clergy and nobles in the Lowlands. The American colonies rose against the anachronistic obstinacies of George III. and not only achieved independence and statehood, but what was of far greater significance to the contemporary passion for doctrinaire politics, also proved, by the aid of the French army and navy, that "all men are created free and equal."

Thus as we look back upon the century, it is clear that the French Revolution was no sudden outbreak of passion, still less "an explosion of gunpowder." It was rather the culmination of a long social process, in which the spirit of France had outgrown its irrational, impotent government and the abominations of a dead feudalism; and under the influence of the philosophy of the age had struggled, not quite impotently, toward political and social reforms. Had this process continued under better direction, it might have ended in a constitutional evolution that would have accomplished peacefully all the reforms the Revolution bought with blood.

# CHAPTER VII

## THE REFORM MOVEMENT UNDER TURGOT AND NECKER

I. The Accession of Louis XVI. II. Turgot: 1. His Reforms in General; 2. Enthusiasm of the Nation; 3. His Difficulties; 4. The Re-establishment of the Parlement of Paris; 5. Its Struggle with Turgot; 6. Turgot's Dismissal. III. Necker: 1. His Character; 2. The Public Debt; 3. Necker's Methods of Meeting the Financial Crisis; 3. His Proposed Reforms; 4. His Dismissal and the *Compte Rendu*; 5. Significant Facts of His Administration—(*a*) The American Revolution, (*b*) Growing Hatred of Marie Antoinette, (*c*) Apparent Prosperity.

On the night of May 10, 1774, the crowd of courtiers rushed with "a mighty noise absolutely like thunder" down the great staircase at Versailles to announce the death of Louis XV. to Louis and Marie Antoinette. The news was not unexpected, for the old king was known to have the smallpox; but in a sudden burst of emotion the new sovereigns fell upon their knees and prayed: "O God, guide us and protect us! We are too young to reign."[1]

There is no evidence that Louis knew what reforms were needed by France. He had never been given any proper training for his official future, and now, hardly more than a boy, he was without any prepara-

[1] Louis XVI. was nearly twenty, and Marie Antoinette not nineteen. A veritable literature has grown up around Marie Antoinette. The original materials are chiefly to be found in the *Memoirs* of Madame Campan, her lady-in-waiting, and in Arneth and Geffroy, *Correspondance Secrète*. Saint-Armand has a good popular life of the queen.

tion except that of a private virtue, which, if unique in the royal house of the Bourbons, by no means fitted him for ruling a nation in the condition of France.

The first cabinet of the new reign was avowedly bent upon reform, and Louis called to his aid the one great administrator produced by France between the days of Colbert and Napoleon Bonaparte, Anne Robert Jacques Turgot.[1] He had already made remarkable improvements in the Limousin, over which he had been intendant, and his appointment by Louis XVI. as controller of the finances was an evidence of the young king's sincerity. Turgot refused to take any steps looking toward constitutional monarchy. He was not interested in politics as such, but set about the rehabilitation of France by the destruction of economic abuses.[2] First of all, in order to meet the fearful famine of 1774, he abolished all tariffs on grain passing between the provinces of the kingdom. Then he abolished the *corvée*, or forced labor on roads and other public works. Then he abolished the trade guilds and their monopolies. At the same time he declared against any new taxes and proposed tax reforms,[3] and undertook to bring the expenses of the state into agreement with its receipts. Liberty of religion and the press he also championed, though

[1] The best English life of Turgot is that by W. W. Stephens. See also Morley, *Critical Miscellanies*, Second Series; Batbie, *Turgot—Philosophe, Economiste et Administrateur*.

[2] His political views appear in his "Memorial to Louis XVI. on Municipalities": "The rights of men gathered in society are not founded on their history as men, but in their nature. There can be no reason to perpetuate establishments which were made without reason. . . . So long as your Majesty does not stray beyond the lines of justice, you may regard yourself as an absolute legislator." See Stephens, *Life and Writings of Turgot*, 265, seq.

[3] Some wit suggested that he was preparing for a St. Bartholomew Day for intendants.

less energetically. Louis promised him full support. "I will share all your views, and always support you in the courageous steps you will have to take," he said. The country grew sanguine that a new era was about to dawn. Voltaire wrote D'Alembert: "It seems to me as if there were a new heaven and a new earth."[1]

But even a king with the best of intentions and with a physiocrat for reform minister could not meet popular expectations. Every reform meant a loss of privilege, and the very rapidity with which decree followed decree swept all classes of the privileged into one concentrated party of opposition. Turgot's reforms did not immediately reduce the price of bread, and in all parts of France, riots—"the grain war"—broke out, which had to be put down by the military. One mob even came to the palace at Versailles. The spirit of the Parisian proletariat grew desperate. "If the rich do not come to the help of the poor and take no pains to provide them with bread," ran one of the numerous anonymous letters and placards, "the poor will demand it with armed hand."

None the less this rapid "bleeding of the nation," as a high court lady termed Turgot's reforms, might have continued indefinitely, and might even have made the Revolution impossible, had it not been for another of Louis XVI.'s acts, which, though prompted by

[1] Madame Roland wrote at this time: "The ministers are enlightened and well disposed, the young king docile and eager for good, the queen amiable and beneficent, the court kind and respectable, the legislative body honorable, the people obedient, wishing only to love their master, the kingdom full of resources. Ah, but we are going to be happy!" Talleyrand was equally hopeful. See his *Memoirs*, I, 17.

kindliness, was utterly unwise—the recall of the Parlement and the abolition of the courts established by Maupeou. The reinstatement of Parlement was a defeat for Turgot, and, as it proved, was to be the occasion of his downfall. From the moment of its reappearance it opposed reforms, and Turgot's decrees were registered with increasing difficulty. Unfortunately, also, the masses misinterpreted the decrees to mean the abrogation of feudal privileges in general, and the wave of disorders which swept over the nation aided the opposition.

The king showed signs of weakening. His minister endeavored to recall him to something better than sentiment. "Do not forget, sire," he wrote April 30, 1776, "that it was weakness which put the head of Charles I. on the block." But Louis lost confidence in the reforms and in Turgot himself. The pressure from Maurepas and the court party grew greater. Marie Antoinette, who had always detested the fat, reserved, awkward guardian of the treasury, became enraged at the recall of one of her friends who had been minister to England, and demanded that he should be reinstated with the title of duke, and that Turgot should be discharged and sent to the Bastile.[1] Then Louis yielded, and on May 12, 1776, Turgot was dismissed, and the state passed over into the hands of the court party.

Resultless as it appeared, Turgot's work was of the utmost importance, in that it gave France a taste

[1] Marie Antoinette wrote her mother, the Empress Maria Theresa, that she had nothing to do with the removal of Turgot. But we have Mercy's letter to the empress giving the account in full. Both letters are in Arneth and Geffroy, *Correspondance*, II, 441, 442.

of what honest administration could do for the unprivileged.

Cluny, Turgot's successor, in the few months of his official life, undid as many of Turgot's reforms as possible. The *corvée* once more was enforced, monopolies again throve, all reforms in taxation were abandoned, and economy was thrown to the winds. As his financial measures he established a royal lottery, and proposed to declare the state bankrupt. By October, 1776, Cluny had squandered all that Turgot had succeeded in saving. Death, however, fortunately removed him, and Maurepas, the prime minister, reverting again to the original policy of reform, gave the portfolio of finance to Jacques Necker, a Genevese and a Protestant. Because of this latter fact the new appointee was not allowed the rank of minister and a place in the cabinet, but had only the title of director of finance. The court party despised him, and with Talleyrand[1] chose to believe "that with his fantastic hat, his long head, his big body, burly and ill shaped, his inattentive airs, his scornful demeanor, his constant use of maxims painfully drawn from the *laboratory of his mind*, he had all the appearance of a charletan." But self-important as he was, the court did Necker injustice.

Of the two dangers which threatened the state, bankruptcy and inequality of privilege, the latter has perhaps been sufficiently described, but the financial difficulty requires explanation. As in the case of other evils, the financial distress of France may be

[1] *Mémoires*, I, 37. Von Holst, *French Revolution*, I, 104, calls Necker a "bold juggler." Gouverneur Morris thought him not a great man.

traced to Louis XIV. His suicidal wars and religious persecution, coupled with boundless extravagance, had bequeathed to his successors a fixed debt of but little less than five hundred million dollars (2,471 million livres). The maladministration, wars, and extravagance of Louis XV. had increased this debt, and although it is impossible to give figures that are accurate, so lacking are we in reliable information, it is safe to say that at the accession of Louis XVI. the national debt of France amounted to more than five hundred million dollars. There were few if any years in which honest statements would not have shown a deficit. The total expenses of the nation at the accession of Louis XVI. were estimated at 399,200,000 livres, and the receipts at 371,980,000 livres. Even on this reckoning there was a deficit of between five and six million dollars, but as a matter of fact the deficit was nearer ten million.[1] So far as the debt itself went, the matter would not to-day be counted serious. Modern France, with a population only half as large again, carries successfully a debt of more than six billion dollars.[2] Besides, France was in many ways economically convalescent. The deficit was not as great as it had been in 1715.[3] Commerce in 1778 was double that of 1763, and as has already

[1] See Boiteau, *Etat de la France en 1789*, ch. 15. Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, bk. v, ch. 3, says on the authority of the Parlement of Bordeaux, that in 1764 the public debt was 2,400,000,000 livres. See further, Stourm, *Les Finances de la Rev. fran.*; Bailly, *L'Histoire financière de la France* On the influence of the financial crisis in general, see Clamageran, *Histoire, du Impot en France*, III; Gomel, *Les Causes financières de la Revolution Française* (*Les Ministères de Turgot et de Necker*); Vührer, *Histoire de la Dette publique en France*, especially ch. 10.

[2] The Statesman's Year-Book, 1900.

[3] See Clamageran, *Hist. du Impot en France*, III, 465 seq., and De Tocqueville, *L'Ancien Regime*, for fullest discussion.

been stated, the condition of the peasants, at least in northern France, was improving. The really serious difficulty lay in the hopelessly confused administrative system, with its duplication of officials and its useless officers, even more than in any attempt to force the privileged classes to pay their proper share of the taxes.

The problem was complicated, also, by the heavy additional expense incurred by the ill-advised, though generous, war with England in aid of the American colonies. To meet these new demands, as well as to avoid a deficit, Necker had recourse to loans of various sorts. It was to prove a fatal policy, but at first it seemed a stroke of genius, for he was able to borrow altogether something like one hundred and six million dollars on not unfavorable rates.[1] But these loans were to be paid from taxes, and here the question of privilege was paramount.

This Necker foresaw and endeavored to anticipate. Less impatient than Turgot, he went about his work cautiously, but with determination. In the interest of economy quite as much as of efficient administration, he reduced the number of the various treasurers from forty-eight to twelve, and reorganized the treasury department on a business basis. Up to this time, as the Count d'Artois naively said later, "the expenses of the king had not been regulated by the receipts, but the receipts by the expenses." Now the system was

[1] Among these loans established by Necker were annuities. In establishing these he disregarded all questions of age and health, and thus exposed the state to serious loss. Persons bought annuities for their children, and it is said that in 1885 there were ten persons to whom the French government was still paying annuities bought in or before 1786! Vührer, *Histoire de la Dette publique*, 272.

reversed, greatly to the chagrin of the queen and her friends. Pensions were cut down twenty-eight million francs a year, and numbers of unnecessary officers in the king's household as well as in different administrative departments were discharged. By way of increasing the income, he forced upon the syndicates who bought up the right of collecting the indirect taxes, new contracts which netted the state several million dollars of additional income. Nor was he so blind as not to see that the financial distress of the nation could be remedied only by improving its general condition. He favored allowing the provincial assemblies to assess the taxes of their provinces, and he induced the king to manumit all serfs on the royal domains—an example followed by many of the nobility and clergy as a class.[1] It was due to his influence, also, that the hideous practice was abolished of torturing prisoners before their trial, although after their condemnation it was still permitted.[2] His plans went even further, and in a lengthy memoir sent by him to the king he proposed reducing the hated *gabelle*, or tax on salt, by destroying the monopoly in salt held by members of the court; to abolish the tax of the *dîme;* to increase the salary of the country curate to two hundred and forty dollars[3] by appropriating some

[1]There were 1,500,000 serfs in France, August 4, 1789. Bailly, *Mémoires*, II, 214.

[2]Such a fact as this, indicating how accustomed the French people were to judicial cruelty, as well as the disregard of rights shown in the existence of thousands of imprisonments without trial by means of the royal *lettres de cachet*, go far to explain the cruel laws of the Revolution. In the same way the fact that Paris had no slaughter-houses and that cattle were slaughtered in the streets must among other things have gone far to brutalize the Parisian mob. (Thiébault, *Mémoires*, I, 35.) Executions were public in the Place de Greve.

[3]It was then less than $150.

of the large revenues of the higher clergy and religious establishments;[1] to abolish the office of intendant; to restrict the Parlements to merely judicial duties, thus destroying their right of "registering" edicts. All of these proposals were wise, and could they have been once put into operation would have gone far toward the regeneration of the nation, but unfortunately some person stole and published the memoir before the king had given his decisions. Immediately all of the parties whose privileges were threatened united, under the lead of the Parlement of Paris, against Necker, and he was forced to resign.

Just before he resigned, Necker issued his famous *Compte Rendu*, or financial report, in which he so manipulated the accounts that the receipts of the state exceeded the expenses by about two million dollars.[2] France now knew how many millions were going to the support of royal establishments, pensions, and sinecures. But this was not the most important result of this publication. The public, which had been given by Turgot the reasons for certain of his decrees, now interpreted this act of Necker's to imply that the government had conceded it the right to know and advise about the national finances. The *Compte Rendu* was, accordingly, not only an interesting document; it was interpreted, more or less distinctly, to be a step toward constitutional government. In this respect it was in some true sense what Boiteau

[1] This proposition is interesting as anticipating the legislation of the Constituent Assembly.

[2] This gratifying result was reached only by omitting the special expenses of the American war. In reality there was a deficit of about $23,000,000 in 1780, and of $16,000,000 in 1781. Gomel, *Causes financières de la Rev. Fran.*, 510. Von Holst, *French Revolution*, I, 104, makes the true deficit 219,000,000 livres.

has rather extravagantly called it, "the first revolutionary step France took."

Two other facts of this short reform period are of importance. The American Revolution not only won French aid, but, as any reader of the Declaration of Independence can understand, it offered practical lessons to the French enthusiasts for liberty. Franklin, with his bland face, his unpowdered hair, his gray clothes, and his general patriarchal simplicity, seemed like the incarnation of the "natural man." We know well enough that Franklin was many removes from such a character, but such he might very well have appeared to the courtiers of Versailles.[1] But quite as much as Franklin, did the part played by French troops and officers in the American Revolution tend to give reality to the doctrines and ideals of liberty. Many of the most prominent members of the first Assembly had, like La Fayette, been in America, and had brought back to France a knowledge of republican simplicity and a desire to see popular sovereignty embodied in French laws.[2]

The other fact to be noticed in these years is the growing hatred of Marie Antoinette. It is not difficult to understand why this should have been the case. The queen was, first of all, an Austrian, and Austria had been for a century the foe of France. But this fact is not sufficient to explain the malignity

[1]Thomas Jefferson, in 1791, declared that it appeared to him that "more respect and veneration attached to the character of Dr. Franklin in France than to that of any other person in the same country, foreign or native," and the Constituent Assembly, at his death in 1790, ordered mourning for three days. Hazen, *American Opinion of the French Revolution*, 148, seq.

[2]See also the preface to the American edition of Stephens, *French Revolution*, I.

exhibited in countless obscene pamphlets which began to appear in 1776, and continued despite all attempts at suppression—a most shocking testimony to the moral depravity of the Parisian public. For an explanation of such phenomena one must look further—to the indiscreet conduct of the queen, her frivolity, her attendance on public masked balls, her choice of friends,[1] her extraordinary talent for making enemies of persons in all classes, her extravagance, her prodigious love of gambling, and, perhaps as much as anything, her opposition to Turgot and Necker, and her known or rightly suspected share in the removal of each.[2]

Yet after all, France seemed more prosperous than for years, and even the clear-eyed Franklin, in all his nine years in France, seems never to have noted any tendency toward revolution. So true is it that pre-revolutionary periods are likely to appear full of prosperity to those who share in that prosperity.

[1] The Count de Dillon actually had his pocket picked under the eyes of the queen.

[2] The utterly baseless scandal of the Diamond Necklace greatly intensified this hatred. For the details of this extraordinary affair, see McCarthy, *French Revolution*, I, chs. 12–14; Carlyle, "The Diamond Necklace," *Essays* (Am. ed.), IV.

# CHAPTER VIII

## BANKRUPTCY AND THE CONVOCATION OF THE STATES GENERAL

I. The Reinstatement of Abuse. II. Calonne: 1. His Methods; 2. Extent of His Borrowings; 3. His Return to Reform. III. The Assembly of the Notables: 1. Reforms Approved by It; 2. Its Call for a National Assembly; 3. The Fall of Calonne. IV. Brienne: 1. His Struggle with the Parlement of Paris; 2. His Proposal of a Plenary Court; 3. New Constitutional. V. The Promise of the States General.

The next day after his dismissal of Necker, Louis declared that "though he had changed ministers, he had not changed principles." None the less, as in the case of Turgot, the dismissal of Necker gave the court party the control of the state, and with it came a rehabilitation of abuse. Joly de Fleury, who succeeded Necker, had hardly assumed office when he considerably increased the tax on objects of consumption. A new loan of a million dollars was authorized to meet the wants of the king's brothers, the Count de Provence and the Count d'Artois[1]; new taxes were levied to carry on the war; the numerous receivers-general whose offices had been abolished by Necker, as well as the other officers he had dismissed, were reinstated. At the same time, in the face of the aid

[1]The Count of Provence, commonly known as Monseigneur, became Louis XVIII., and the Count d'Artois, Charles X. They both were on dubious terms with Louis.

the army was giving the American colonies, and as if to emphasize its reaction from liberal sentiments, the government decreed that no person should become a captain whose family had not been noble for four generations—a decree most galling to the Third Estate.

Opposition came from the provinces. The Parlement of Paris registered all the new decrees without hesitation, but the Parlement of Besançon refused, some of its members appearing in Versailles with bread made of oatmeal to show the distress of the peasantry. They met only reprimand and threats, however, and went back to register the tax for their district, but at the same time to demand for themselves their old provincial assembly and for the nation the *States General*, or national assembly of the three estates (February 17, 1783).[1] Other Parlements joined in the resistance to the new financial system, but found the ministry too strong for them. As a result, under the lead of the Parlement of Besançon, these bodies of magistrates began the formation of a sort of confederation, not so much to protect their ancient privileges as to "return to great principles" and to demand by a unanimous cry the States General.

To all appearances, however, the ministry's policy was highly successful, and the royal family itself won favor by the birth of the dauphin.[2] The king seems to have believed the time for economy to have passed

[1] It is worth noticing that this same Parlement, when the royal commandant of the town attempted to force them to register the edict, declared that "the king *ruled by law*, and that the men to whom he delegated his power were, like other citizens, obliged to respect law."

[2] This prince died in 1789. The unfortunate child known in Bourbon records as Louis XVII., who disappeared during the Reign of Terror, was a younger brother.

with the signing of the treaty with England in September, 1783, and set about buying the palace of Rambouillet to save some of his friends from bankruptcy. Fleury had by this time been succeeded by D'Ormesson, but he was dismissed, and a thoroughgoing creature of the court, Calonne, was placed in his stead, the eighth administrator of finance in nine years.

Calonne was for a few months the ideal of the thoughtless, reckless court ring, at the head of which stood the Polignac women, the bosom friends of the queen. His policy was that of the conscious bankrupt: to gain credit, practice luxury. No insane policy was ever so rigorously followed. Economy, taxes, reforms were all thrown to the winds, and money was borrowed with absolute madness. For a few months the court reveled in a golden age. Even the poor were cared for generously, great public works were erected in various cities, agricultural prizes were established, and, in fact, every virtue seems to have had some gold medal endowed for its encouragement.

And all this on the hollow foundations of debt. By 1786 Calonne had borrowed $130,000,000, the annual deficit was $25,000,000, the entire national income only about $82,000,000, and the interest-bearing debt over $600,000,000.[1] But there are limits even to audacity, and the inevitable result overtook Calonne. He was borrowing to pay loans, he was anticipating taxes, and his resources began to fail. The national receipts were insufficient to pay the

[1]The relative wealth of pre- and post-revolutionary France can be realized by recalling that the annual budget of France is to-day about the same amount as this entire debt, though in purchasing value only about a third.

running expenses of the government. The clergy, when asked for a gift of $4,000,000, gave only $3,600,000, and that on condition that the works of Voltaire should be suppressed.[1] The Parlements both of Paris and the provinces registered new loans only under protest, and Louis was increasingly obliged to adopt the arbitrary methods of Louis XV. Public confidence in Calonne himself vanished, and by the end of 1786 the subscriptions for his loans began to fall off. Thereupon he undertook a stamp tax on paper, music, carriages, and objects of luxury in general. He sold titles indiscriminately. And then, in despair of inducing Parlement to register any more loans, Calonne proposed to the king to call together the *Assembly of Notables* to consider reform in the taxes. "But that is Neckerism you are proposing!" said Louis. "Sire," said Calonne, "in the state of affairs, one can offer you nothing better."

And in truth at last, though too late, Calonne was to learn other things from Necker than the fatal art of borrowing. The programme of loans was to be abandoned and reform was to be again attempted. Necker's proposals for provincial assemblies, equalization of taxes among the three orders, the reduction of customs, the land and capitation taxes, and the abolition of the *corvée*—all these now were Calonne's. He even proposed to sell part of the royal domain, and apply the proceeds to the public debt. And the Notables, the most prominent nobles, ecclesiastics, and magistrates, were to be summoned to approve this

[1] The clergy also wished the penalty of death inflicted on writers like Voltaire, but the king refused to listen to their proposals.

general scheme, and thereby reduce the opposition of court and Parlement.[1]

February 22, 1787, the Notables met in Versailles, to the number of one hundred and forty-five. Their sessions were held in seven boards, each presided over by a prince of the blood. To them Calonne unfolded, with charming self-confidence, his difficulties and his proposed reforms.[2] Chiefly because of his unfortunate reputation, Calonne found little sympathy in his new assembly, although it was by no means lacking in liberal members like La Fayette. Through their influence, doubtless, the proposal for establishing provincial assemblies was approved without delay, as was the abolition of the *corvée*, but the provisions looking for an equalization of privileges found foes as well as friends. The Notables were more concerned with learning the exact state of the finances than with new taxes. They even accused Calonne of peculation, and finally assured the king that the only basis upon which they could assist him was the removal of Calonne. The king, with characteristic weakness, therefore dismissed him, and even exiled him to Lorraine.

In appointing his successor Louis would not listen to the popular cry for a recall of Necker, now the very god of the populace, but again following the wishes of the queen, appointed Calonne's arch-enemy

[1] These sensible proposals are said to have been the work of Dupont de Nemours, Turgot's most prominent disciple and a correspondent of five kings.

[2] A comic print of the times represents the meeting as an assembly of poultry before a farmer who makes to them this opening address: "Dear birds, I have assembled you to advise me what sauce I shall eat you with." A cock replies, "But we don't want to be eaten." Whereupon the farmer replies, "You wander from the subject."

in the Notables, an impossible man, Loménie de Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse. The new minister immediately proposed a loan of sixty million livres, promising an annual saving of forty million in the royal establishment. The Parlement, "touched with his beautiful promises," promptly registered the loan. The Notables, however, grew impatient of Brienne's insistence upon Calonne's further theory, "submission and taxation," and La Fayette even proposed that the king be asked to summon a National Assembly within five years. "What, Monsieur," cried the Comte d'Artois, who was presiding at the time, "do you demand the convocation of the States General?" "Yes, Monseigneur," replied La Fayette, "and even more than that!"

But the affair went no further. Brienne easily dismissed this anomalous representative body with a polite speech of congratulation upon its services, and on May 25th it vanished. Though it had had no legal status, it had done one great thing: as La Fayette wrote his friends in America, it had "helped the nation form the habit of thinking upon public affairs." But the Notables had really done something quite as important. Though clinging to the principle of privilege, they had sanctioned many of the reforms of Turgot and Necker, vicariously proposed by Calonne.

But even here one does not see the greatest significance of this informal assembly. It was the publication of the fact, presaged by Turgot's prefixing reasons to his edicts, and by the publication of Necker's *Compte Rendu*, that the ancient French abso-

lutism was moving toward constitutional monarchy. It was as Mirabeau, already a man of importance in the literary world of politics, foresaw. The day of the Notables' meeting "preceded by but little that of the National Assembly."

The Assembly of Notables had no legal power, and before the reforms it approved could become laws it was necessary to submit them to the Parlement of Paris. Brienne certainly bungled matters; but as it was, the Parlement, no more than the Notables, made any difficulty over the institution of the provincial assemblies or the abolition of the *corvée*.[1]

The main questions at issue between Brienne and the Parlement were fiscal. Parlement would not register a stamp tax. It, like the Notables, preferred investigating the condition of the nation. The king bade it keep within its prerogatives, and register. The Parlement thereupon voted that for a permanent tax the States General should be summoned. The constitutional position was untenable, but the vote voiced a rapidly growing public opinion. The Parlement became instantly the idol of the crowd. It was a new rôle for it to play—it, the quintessence of privilege, now championing popular rights—and it grew somewhat intoxicated, refused to register a decree looking to an improved land tax, as well as that establishing the stamp tax. Whereupon Brienne had the two decrees registered in a *lit de justice*, and exiled the Parlement to Troyes.

The exile of the Paris Parlement was followed by

[1] One is astonished to find how glibly and frequently the men of these years used the word "revolution." On all sides it was apparently held to be synonymous with millennium.

resolutions of all the provincial Parlements calling for the States General, and complaining bitterly against the present helplessness of the one body having even a semblance of a constitutional check upon the extravagance and violence of the court. And this universal outcry, coupled with his need of funds, compelled Brienne to patch up a bargain with the Paris Parlement. In accordance with this, the Parlement returned to the capital, and registered a loan for eighty-eight million dollars; the vacillating government recalled the two tax edicts and promised that the States General should be summoned in four years.

But the struggle still continued, the Parlement now refusing to register edicts and now passing decrees over the king's cancellations. Affairs grew desperate.

Brienne and his counselors bethought themselves of the *coup d' état* of Maupeou, and determined to suppress the Parlement of Paris, or at least abridge its powers. In place of its having supreme registering powers, these were to reside in a plenary court composed of persons appointed by the king, while subordinate courts were to replace the Parlements of the provinces. But before this decree had been sent to Parlement, that body drew up a declaration of what it judged were the elements of the French constitution. Chief among the propositions of this extraordinary document was the *right of the nation to grant subsidies through the States General.*

And here we see the evolution of theoretical nationalism completed. As an historical statement the claim was impossible. For a hundred and seventy-five years taxes had been levied and paid without a thought of

the States General, and in point of fact they had been summoned only fifteen times since their first meeting in 1302. But as an expression of what the government of France *ought* to be if a people's political theory were to be realized, the statement was almost the French Declaration of Independence.

Brienne, it is true, used force and got his edict registered, but the storm it raised was too great for him. The Paris Parlement became the center of wildest popularity. Thirty thousand people, according to Jefferson, surrounded the Parlement house cheering its favorites. The great court of the Châtelet pronounced the edict invalid; the Parlement at Rennes declared any member of the new court "infamous"; at Grenoble a mob of citizens rose to protect their magistrates against two regiments of soldiers, and the soldiers themselves, incited by the nobility, refused to fire upon the crowd; in Dauphiné the military commandant was plainly told he could not count upon his troops to execute the edicts. The very bishops protested, and demanded in their turn the States General. Abandoned by the clergy, disobeyed by the army, fought by the Parlements and the courts, hated by the nation, Brienne yielded, and resigned, through the queen's favor to be consoled by the money he had made and the gift of a cardinal's hat. But even before this had happened, on July 5th, Louis had called on learned societies to tell him how the States General should be chosen and organized, and on August 8, 1788, by an order of the Council, suspended the Plenary Court, and convoked the States General for May 1, 1789.

# PART III

## THE ATTEMPT AT CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY

## CHAPTER IX

### THE STATES GENERAL AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

I. The Results of the Revolution thus far Noticeable. II. Difficulties Confronting Necker: 1. Bankruptcy; 2. The States General; 3. The French Character; 4. Agricultural Distress. III. The Elections to the States General; 1. Method; 2. Difficulties. IV. The States General: 1. The Deputies; 2. Their Spirit; 3. Its Opening Session. V. The Evolution of the National Assembly: 1. The Struggle over the Voting; 2. The Organization of the National Assembly; 3. The Tactics of the Court; 4. The Oath of the Tennis Court; 5. The Royal Session; 6. The Triumph of the Third Estate.

"I think," wrote Thomas Jefferson from Paris in May, 1788, "that in the course of three months the royal authority has lost and the rights of the people gained as much ground, by a revolution of public opinion only, as England gained in all her civil wars

GENERAL LITERATURE IN ENGLISH.—A brilliant account of the States General and its evolution into the National Assembly is that of Carlyle, *French Revolution*, bk. iv, ch. 4, bk. v, chs. 1, 2. A very detailed account, with brief biographical sketches, is to be found in McCarthy, *French Revolution*, I, chs. 27–40. Other acounts are to be found in Watson, *Story of France*, II, ch. 8; Thiers, *History of the French Revolution*, I, 35–52.

The literature on the Revolution, even in English, is vast. Mignet, *French Revolution*, and Michelet, *French Revolution*, are almost classical hand-books. From the socialistic point of view are Gronlund, *Ca Ira*, and

under the Stuarts.[1] And later he wrote that he believed that the nation, "within two or three years, would be in the enjoyment of a tolerably free constitution, and that without it having cost them a drop of blood." The same enthusiasm filled France, from the ignorant peasantry, who thought that they were "to be relieved of all taxes and that the first two orders would alone provide for all the needs of the state,"[2] to Louis himself, who looked forward to the moment in which he should find himself "surrounded by the representatives of a generous and faithful nation." To fill the cup of France's joy to the full, Necker, the very genius (so men thought) of finance and reform, was recalled.

The financial problem which now confronted Necker was far more serious than that of his first administration. Bankruptcy had been seriously con-

Bax, *French Revolution*. Watson's work is unconventional, not scholarly, but very readable. Van Laun, *Revolutionary Epoch*, presents the traditional views. Carlyle's celebrated work is best read after one has gained some knowledge of the events. Stephens' *History of the French Revolution* is the best in English, but only two volumes (through the year 1793) have appeared. Von Sybel's voluminous work (4 vols.) is a mine of information, but could not have been intended to be read. Thiers is voluminous and not impartial. Taine, *The French Revolution*, is brilliant, and furnishes infinite details, but is bitterly opposed to the Revolution. Good modern hand-books are those by Gardiner, Morris, Rose, Stephens (*Revolutionary Europe*). The last three cover also the Napoleonic period. James Stephens' *Lectures on the French Revolution*, are among the best of the older literature.

The early portion of the Revolution is profoundly discussed by Von Holst, *The French Revolution Tested by Mirabeau's Career*, and interestingly by McCarthy, *The French Revolution*. A very valuable collection of contemporary American notes is to be found in Hazen, *American Opinion of the French Revolution* (Johns Hopkins Un. Press).

[1] Hazen, *American Opinion of the French Revolution*, 30-34; Jefferson, *Works*, II, 257, seq.; 469 70. The letters of Jefferson during these years are well worth considering quite as much from their mistaken as from their true judgments. That he should have favored every change of Brienne's administration shows one of two things: either Brienne was not as weak as historians have pictured him, or the true path was so clouded that not even Jefferson could see it plainly. Mirabeau seems about the only man of clear vision during the period.

[2] One is here reminded of the promises of Henry IV. of France, and of the Utopia expected by the negroes of the South when emancipation would give each of them "ten acres and a mule."

templated by Brienne, and as early as October, 1787, Arthur Young reports that the question was everywhere discussed "whether a bankruptcy would occasion civil war and a total over throw of the government."[1]

But another question confronted the redoubtable Genevese: How should the States General be elected? It is not without a humorous element, this mad race on the part of a nation after an Assembly that had been only a remembrance to the grandfathers of their great-grandfathers, and the despair of a king calling upon academies and savants to tell him how to get together the Assembly he had promised solemnly should meet on a certain day! But another difficulty confronted Necker, which neither he nor any person could successfully meet. And that was the character of the very people who clamored for liberty and the States General. Among the masses there was brutality, ignorance, and the utter absence of any great conservative ideals; among the courtiers there was little except frivolity, debauchery, delightful manners, and monumental selfishness; among the intellectual classes there was, it is true, great liberality of thought and elevated theories, but, though with many notable exceptions, little conservative morality, and much loquacious dilettantism. Despite his appreciation of the rise of a liberal public opinion, and despite the results it had reached, Jefferson did not judge

[1] The answer most commonly given was that such a measure would certainly not occasion either, if conducted by a man of abilities, vigor, and firmness. But, as Young himself declared, the man was wanting among all the ministers, past or present. Gouverneur Morris noticed the same astonishing lack. "Gods," he exclaims, "what a theater this is for a first-rate character!" Hazen, *American Opinion*, etc., 66, gives others of his opinions to the same effect.

the nation in 1788 to be sensible of the value of trial by jury, or politically ripe to accept even the English *habeas corpus* law. "The people at large," he wrote Mrs. Adams in 1787, "view every object only as it may furnish puns and *bon-mots;* and I pronounce that a good punster would disarm the whole nation were they ever so seriously determined to revolt." As if there were not enough difficulties for any reformer, nature itself turned upon France. The harvest of 1788 was fearfully damaged by a tornado, while the winter of 1788-89 was of unprecedented severity. The Seine was frozen for two months, the government had to maintain huge fires throughout Paris to keep the poor from freezing, while bread became so scarce that the bakers were allowed to sell only a small amount to any one person; and even among the rich, guests were expected to bring their own bread to dinner. As a result of this distress, the peasants grew desperate, and thousands flocked to the cities, and especially to Paris, there to swell the brutal proletariat.

To advise as to methods of electing the States General the Notables were again summoned, but without satisfactory results, and Necker was left to his own devices. As a result, there was issued, January 24, 1789, an Order in Council providing that the States General should consist of one thousand members, one half of whom should be from the Third Estate, the other half to be drawn equally from the two other orders. This double representation had been given the order by the king "because its cause was allied with generous sentiments, and would always obtain

the support of public opinion." Although the number of deputies was later increased, the proportions remained the same. The order provided also that the unit of election should be the *bailliage*, or county, and that each *bailliage* should elect a number of deputies to the States General proportionate to its population.[1] A system of election was devised more complicated than that by which American citizens elect their President. When one recalls that this was laid upon a nation ignorant of the most rudimentary processes of representative government,[2] that in addition to the regular deputies alternates had also to be chosen, and that at each stage of the electoral process instructions, or *cahiers*, had to be drawn up to be forwarded to the next electoral body, the wonder is that the elections could have been conducted at all. As it was, all the provinces were by no means content to adopt the prescribed plan, and in some cases, notably that of Brittany, were so vehement in their opposition that special decrees had to be issued in their behalf. It is indeed hard to see how the electoral process could have been carried through had it not been for the invaluable advice

[1] The method of election of the delegates from the two upper orders was simple. The noblesse and clergy, with feudal holdings, met in the electoral assembly of every *bailliage*, in which they owned fiefs and elected their deputies. The curates could also appear at the electoral assembly and vote in person. It was this fact that gave the States General such a large proportion of curates among the clerical deputies. They had simply outvoted the bishops at the electoral assembly of the *bailliage*. Far more cumbersome was the method prescribed for the Third Estate. The towns and villages elected delegates to the electoral assembly of their *bailliage*. Those thus elected met at the appointed place and reduced themselves to one-fourth their original number, and this one-fourth elected the deputies to the States General. But even this process was complicated in cities, where ancient guilds elected representatives to the town electoral assembly, which in its turn elected delegates to the electoral assembly of the *bailliage*.

[2] Brienne, it is true, had attempted to inaugurate provincial Assemblies, whose members should, in the process of time, be elected, but the edict had not been given sufficient time and trial to vitiate the statement in the text.

given all parts of France by the Assembly of Dauphiné, of which Jean Joseph Mounier was president.

The personnel of the body thus elected, though good, was by no means extraordinary. It is impossible to give the exact number there present, but the most likely figures are these: The clergy, 308; the noblesse, 285, and the Third Estate, 621. It will be seen, therefore, that the number of the Third Estate was greater than that of the other two combined. The temper of the Assembly was, on the whole, liberal. Of the 308 clergy, though the bishops were well represented, 205 were curates. Two shades of political faith were represented in the ranks of the nobility; there was the liberalism of La Fayette, and the obstinate conservatism of "Barrell" Mirabeau, the brother of the count. Of the 621 delegates who composed the Third Estate, two-thirds were lawyers or legal officials—a most important fact; many of them, also, were scholars. Only ten of them can possibly be considered as belonging to the lower classes. It will be seen, therefore, as a whole that the States General represented the well-to-do classes. It was not in the least an uncultured rabble, but was made up of the best blood in France.[1]

The desires of this highly intelligent body are to be found in overwhelming detail in the *cahiers*, or instructions, which their constituencies had given them. From these it appears that, on the whole, each

[1] Accounts of this election are given in Stephens, *The French Revolution*, I, ch. 1; Taine, *French Revolution*, I, bk. i; McCarthy, *French Revolution*, I, ch. 24; Cherest, *La Chute de l'Ancien Regime*, II (very detailed). The original material will be found in the *Archives Parlementaires;* Bouchez et Roux, *Histoire Parlementaire;* and in the *Moniteur* (original), introductory volume.

of the three orders was anxious to give the state reforms, and may very fairly be considered as desirous of embodying in some form of constitution the spirit which had forced Louis and his ministers to summon the body.[1] So far as revolution is concerned, it is evident from many facts that the States General regarded a revolution as already in progress, and considered itself as its product rather than its first step. Mirabeau has left the statement that "there was not one commoner who did not come with very moderate sentiments to the National Assembly."

In nothing was the incompetence of Necker more clearly shown than in his refusal to decide in advance whether the new body should vote, as in 1614, by order or by member. The question was more than parliamentary. To vote by order (*par ordre*) was to maintain only a sort of corporate representation, in which the doubled membership of the Third Estate would have but one vote to the privileged orders' two; to vote by member (*par tête*) was to establish true representation and to give France a genuine national assembly, in which the Third Estate might outvote the other two.

Throughout the spring of 1789 the newly elected deputies began to arrive in Versailles, where those of the Third Estate, at least, would have suffered at the hands of extortionate landlords had the government not established legal rates. On May 4th, amid the blare of trumpets, along streets lined with rich tapestries hanging from windows crowded with spectators, the

[1] A good summary of these *cahiers* is given in Lowell, *Eve of the French Revolution*, and are treated in detail in Chassin, *Les Cahiers*. They are printed in full in the *Archives Parlementaires*, I–VI.

delegates of the three estates marched in procession to the Church of St. Louis, to attend mass and listen to an eloquent sermon. The newspapers of the day contain elaborate directions, drawn up by the royal master of ceremonies, as to how the deputies should dress and march. First went the Third Estate, in black clothes, white neckties, and three-cornered black hats (which were to be inexorably buttonless); then the nobility, with their gorgeous court dress (the Duke of Orleans, the enemy of his cousin the king, ostentatiously walking ahead of his order, close to the last of the commoners); then the higher clergy, in magnificent pontificals; then the curates, a mass of somber black; and last of all the king and the court. A grand spectacle—but what were they all to do? Save France, fervently thought they, and the king, and Necker. But how? And so far as one can discover, not a soul among the twelve hundred saviors knew.

Incredible as it appears, Necker was just as ignorant.[1] This the first meeting of the body showed, when Monday, May 5th, it gathered in the *Salle des Menus*, which had been splendidly prepared to receive it. With elaborate and, to the commoners, exasperating formality, the delegates found their places. After a couple of hours' delay the king took his seat upon a throne covered with fleur-de-lis. As the great meeting became silent, he arose and delivered a well-intentioned speech, which was received so cordially that Gouverneur Morris felt tears start from his eyes

[1] Though it is true he seems to have had some fantastic notion of arranging the nobles and the clergy into an upper and the Third Estate into a lower house.

in spite of himself.[1] He was followed by the Master of the Seals, who succeeded in showing the genuine willingness of Louis for moderate reforms, and in saying that the nation was in debt, and that the States General had been assembled to see that it was got out of debt. Necker then read, or caused his clerk to read, a speech which contained much information and "many things very fine," but was three hours long. In fact, he bored everybody, and so much less interested was he in reforms than in the deficit that he disappointed every liberal. But the king went back to his palace thoroughly content, certain that the end of his difficulties had come.

When the States General assembled on May 6th to hold its first business session, it was at once confronted by the question as to whether the voting was to be *par ordre* or *par tête*. The difficulty first appeared in the necessity of verifying the delegates' credentials. The nobles proceeded at once to verify as a separate chamber, the vote standing 188 to 47; while the clergy, though voting 133 to 114 to verify as an order, did not proceed to organize as such. This attitude of the two orders was a legitimate outcome of the Old Régime. The fraction of a great people which had enjoyed where others had lost privileges, was now endeavoring to block all reform by continuing to oppose itself to the nation. It was the last ditch in which monopoly could fight. But the Third Estate refused even to verify credentials until it had been

[1] Gouverneur Morris says that when Louis sat down he put on his hat. The nobles did the same, and so did some of the commoners, though they took them off again. Then Louis took his off. Whereupon the queen took him to account. Morris thought the two discussed the matter then and there, but says he cannot "swear to this."

decided that the three estates were to meet in one indivisible assembly. May 11th it declared itself simply a collection of citizens without organization, without credentials, without legal existence.[1] For weeks both sides obstinately sought to win over the other, and compromise became every day the more impossible. Business evidently was out of the question under such conditions, and May 28th the king interfered, commanding the three estates to verify separately. But matters had gone too far for such a command to be obeyed. Mirabeau moved to invite the clergy "in the name of the God of Peace" to join the commons. The curates wavered. Introduced by Mirabeau, Siéyès, the framer of nearly every constitution that France had during his life, on June 10th, moved that a committee inform the clergy and the nobles that the Third Estate summoned them for the last time; that on the next day its members would begin to verify not as an estate, but as *the representatives of the nation.* The clergy wavered still more. On June 11th the process of verification of these self-styled representatives of the nation began. Two days later the curates began to come over. On June 17th, the slowly swelling company of commoners and curates adopted the name *National Assembly*, and France, if only Frenchmen would recognize it, ceased to be under the control of absolutism.

But all Frenchmen could not see it, and there began a struggle of the National Assembly for its existence. It is not difficult to understand the opposition of the

[1] The first speech of Mirabeau the *Moniteur* reports is on May 5th, opposing even the appointment of a committee for conference with the nobles.

nobility. The court party could not see into the future, but could see in all the actions of the Third Estate supreme presumption. They applied to the king, and persuaded him to undertake to bring about by force what they had not been able to accomplish by argument. Had they been content with this plan, they would have made a sufficiently great mistake, but blindness and insolence hurried on that which they had too little foresight even to fear.

Their method of warfare was worthy of their frivolity. On the 20th of June, when the Third Estate, or National Assembly, came to its hall it found the doors closed and guarded by troops. Notice for the first time was then served upon it by the master of ceremonies that there was to be a special royal session on the next day but one, and that the hall must be closed for the accommodation of the carpenters.

It was a clever plan, but it miscarried. The commoners marched to a great building in the neighborhood of the palace—a public tennis-court, standing yet, in a back street in Versailles, at once the Runnymede and the Independence Hall of France. There, in the unfurnished room, amidst intense excitement, with upstretched hands they solemnly swore never to separate until they had drawn up a constitution for France.[1]

Yet to the king and the court all this was but a name and a joke. Third Estate or National Assembly, *Salle des Menus* or tennis-court, it was all the same. The commoners must yield. On the 23d of

[1]The oath and its signatures are still to be seen in the archives of France. See for full discussion, Fling, "The Oath of the Tennis Court," in *Nebraska University Studies*, II, No 3 (Oct. 1899).

June the royal session was held. In the meantime one hundred and forty-nine of the clergy had joined the National Assembly. This in itself was enough to confirm its independent spirit, but the vain, stupid malice of the court party hastened events. The commons, when they came to the royal session, found the hall surrounded by soldiers, and were forced to wait in the rain until the other estates had been granted admission. Even if they had forgotten Maupeou and Brienne, events could well suggest a *coup d'état.* The nobles expected a ready if unwilling submission. The king commanded the estates to separate, and to meet in separate chambers and there deliberate. He emphatically asserted his determination, in case of hopeless disagreement between the three orders, to carry on the work of reform alone. He further declared that all reform should leave the army, feudal dues, and the tithes untouched. The session was an illustration of the character and policy of Louis. From the time he dismissed Turgot he was always behind events. Such strong words might perhaps have done six weeks before, but since the coming of the clergy the union of the orders was inevitable. To prevent it was to attempt the impossible.

Instantly the new position of the Third Estate, or the National Assembly, was apparent. The king left the hall. The nobility and a part of the clergy retired to their chambers. The commoners remained in their seats. It was an act of disobedience. Brézé, master of ceremonies, said, "Messieurs, you have heard the king's orders." It was one of the few critical seconds in history. To leave the hall would have been to give

up all claims of representing the people; to stay meant disobedience of the king's express command and probable punishment. The deputies wavered. But just at this moment Mirabeau arose, and in his tremendous voice addressed the master of ceremonies: "Yes, Monsieur, we have heard what the king has said; but do you, who cannot be the interpreter of his orders to the States General; do you, who have right neither to be here nor to speak here—do you tell those who sent you that we are here by the will of the people, and that we will not leave our places except at the point of the bayonet."[1] Thunderstruck Brézé left the room and the huge Mirabeau, as he was accustomed to leave the king, backward.

But the position of the commoners had become critical. They were no longer mere reformers; they were rebels. They had deliberately disobeyed the command of the king. Immediately, upon motion of Mirabeau, they voted by an overwhelming majority that the persons of the members of the National Assembly were inviolable, and proceeded to business as before. For a day or two, it is true, it looked as if the Assembly might be crushed by soldiery. But Louis, good-natured and vacillating, was no man to keep up a struggle, and within four days after he had commanded the estates to vote *par ordre*, he had commanded the two upper estates to unite with the third and to vote *par tête*. They, more obedient than the commons, yielded, though with protests, one noble, it is said, assembling for weeks quite by himself. On

[1] There are various versions of this story, but they seem to agree in the main facts here given. The precise words of Mirabeau are also hopelessly lost, but not their general sense.

the 27th of June the union of the three estates was complete. The States General had vanished, and in its place had arisen the National Constituent Assembly, the first truly representative body that France had ever known. And this new assembly had had its origin in disobedience to the king, had voted its members inviolable, had taken solemn oath to give France a constitution. Without a leader and without a programme could it evolve an efficient government, and would the king and court recognize its self-determined powers? In the answer given by events to these questions lay the future of the movement so auspiciously begun.

# CHAPTER X

## THE UPRISING OF THE MASSES[1]

I. The New *Coup d'Etat* Planned by the Court: 1. Paris and the Parisians; 2. The Plans of the Court; 3. The Dismissal of Necker. II. The Search for Arms. III. The Surrender of the Bastille: 1. The Bastille; 2. The "Capture"; 3. The Subsequent Lynchings. IV. The Effect and Significance of the Fall of the Bastille: 1. The First Emigration; 2. The New Institutions; 3. Uprisings throughout France; 4. The Rise of the Nation. V. The Impotence of Government.

The development within the sphere of constitutional government did not represent the only phase of the revolution through which France was consciously and exultingly passing. In closest union with it was the upheaval among the masses. For years discontent had been working in France, and at times had been with great difficulty suppressed. Yet the masses had as yet been of no very great influence in the new movement. That they should now assert themselves was due to the collapse of absolutism and the consequent impotence of the government, but more specifically to a second attempt on the part of Louis and the court to suppress the National Assembly. And this within a week after the failure of the blustering royal session of June 23d.

[1]On the fall of the Bastille, see Stephens, *French Revolution*, I, ch. 5; McCarthy, *French Revolution*, I, chs. 42-46; Watson, *Story of France*, II, ch. 10; Michelet, *History of the French Revolution* (Bohn ed.), 132-160. For complete treatment, see Dussaulx, *De l'Insurrection Parisienne et de la Prise de la Bastille*, and Bond, *La Prise de la Bastille*. See also the mass of original material in *Archives Parlementaires*, and *Moniteur* (reprint), I.

There had been disorder throughout the country from the time the States General had been summoned, but, though the expression of hatred of ancient abuses and capable of almost any growth, it was not of sufficient importance to call for more than mention. For the first emergence of truly revolutionary violence one must look to Paris.

Paris in 1789 was by no means the beautiful city of to-day. Its streets were narrow, crooked, and dirty. Its population was without community of spirit and its government was inefficient and venal. During the past few months of want it had attracted crowds of beggars and desperate men from all parts of France, and its lower classes were incomparably brutalized. Order had been kept with difficulty, and the fatal lack of the police force of a modern city was evidenced in the impunity with which a mob could sack a great establishment like that of the papermaker Reveillon (April 27, 1789). Morris may have looked on its character with too puritanical eyes, but his words are certainly explicit: "Paris is perhaps as wicked a spot as exists. Incest, murder, bestiality, fraud, rapine, oppression, baseness, cruelty, are common." Yet there was no place in all France where the new philosophy had struck so deep or had grown so radical; and the priests of the new cult, the apostles of the newly discovered rights, were the journalists.

Never was there such a turbulent flood of pamphlets and newspapers and books.[1] Good-natured, philosophical, agricultural Arthur Young was astonished at it. On the 9th of June, 1789, he went into the

[1] The *Révolutions de Paris* had a circulation of 200,000.

Palais Royal, the rendezvous of booksellers, travelers, newsmongers, and scamps, to procure a catalogue of the new publications. He discovered that every hour produced something new; thirteen had come out on the day of his visit, sixteen on the day before, and in the preceding week ninety-two.[1] These political tracts, he discovered also, found their way throughout all the country. And nineteen-twentieths of all these publications he declares were in favor of liberty, and were commonly violent against the clergy and the nobility. If journals were suppressed, they appeared under a new name. Never was there a greater evidence of the power of inflammatory journalism. Paris was not only full of patriotic enthusiasm and the champion of the Assembly; it was fairly alive with reformers, agitators, demagogues, and fanatics, and in consequence increasingly was the prey of that insane suspicion which seizes a community that is superficially full of wit, but fundamentally is immoral.

It was to such a city that there came rumors that the king and the court were attempting to use the army to crush completely the new Assembly, now barely a fortnight old. Just what these rumors were we cannot now decide, but we know enough to be sure that in general they must have been correct. For barely had Louis accepted the Assembly than, coming again under the influence of the queen and the court, he determined to destroy it. Absolutism, the court, privileges, all things were as before the meeting of the States General, and Marie Antoi-

[1] One publisher issued 1,500 pamphlets and books in two years.

nette and her friends would have been farsighted indeed if they had seen the real significance of the mimic war between the orders at Versailles. France had seen many disorders, and the monarchy had always been able to crush opposition. It is easy to see why a new *coup d'état* should be planned.

The plan was simple. Marshal de Broglie was ordered secretly to gather troops and surround Paris and Versailles. Necker was to be dismissed, the troops were to move in upon the National Assembly, and then all things were to be as they had been before the meeting of the States General. By the 1st of July the plan was ready for execution. Strange uniforms began to appear in the streets of Versailles, and the troops formerly stationed far away, on the frontiers or in other cities, rapidly gathered about Paris. July 11th the royal mine was sprung. On that day, as Necker was sitting at dinner with friends, a sealed letter was brought him; he broke the seal, and without a change of countenance read the letter's contents, folded it, put it in his pocket, and continued his conversation. It was a command to leave France immediately. Without a word to his servants, without even telling his daughter his plans, he started off the same afternoon in his coach for the frontier. On the next day the news was brought to Paris. Camille Desmoulins, one of the most brilliant of the Parisian journalists, plunged into the motley crowd at the Palais Royal, leaped upon one of the tables, and shouted that Necker had been dismissed, that his departure was the St. Bartholomew's bell of patriots, that on that very evening the Swiss and the German battal-

ions were to march from the Champs de Mars to slaughter all patriots. "There is not a moment to lose," he cried; "we have but one resource—to rush to arms, to wear cockades whereby we may know each other. What colors shall we wear? Will you wear green, color of hope, or the blue of Cincinnatus, the color of the liberty of America, and of a democracy?" "Green! green!" the crowd shouted. Camille bound a green ribbon on his hat, the crowd pulled green leaves from the trees, and rushed out to gather arms.

As we look back upon it, we can see the alarm was well grounded. A day more and the Assembly would have been in prison or in exile, Paris in the hands of the troops, France again in the hands of an irresponsible master.

It was a wild night in Paris, that night of the 12th of July, 1789. The city officials were powerless to keep order. The French Guards, the natural police, fraternized with the people. Mobs of the lowest characters went howling up and down the streets, looting the gunsmith shops, the bakeries, and the taverns; the city was practically without government, in the hands of a populace half-demented with one of those panics to which it was subject. The troops were at the doors, the city was to be starved into submission, and the people of Paris were without arms!

By degrees a semblance of order returned. The shopkeepers of their own accord armed themselves and began to patrol the streets. The electors of the city, who had but just met to elect the deputies to the States General, extemporized a provisional government, and began to organize a volunteer force, the

National Guards, for the defense of the city and the maintenance of order. July 13th was passed in comparative quiet, but the revolutionary leaders, and especially the agents of the Duke of Orleans, were preparing for a great demonstration. On the morning of July 14th the tocsin called the National Guard and the mob alike to the streets. The gates of the city were closed, and the mob, which now included men of all classes, took up its mad search for arms. But arms were hard to get. Flesselles, the provost of the merchants, restrained the crowd momentarily by deception, but the news soon came that there were arms in the Hôtel des Invalides. A few of the mob at the same time began to shout that there were others in the Bastille. The crowd divided, some surging thither, others starting off toward The Invalides. There the governor attempted to deceive them. In vain. They broke into the great building, ransacked it, took every musket and sword they could find in the boxes in the cellar, in the stands in the guard-houses, or in the museum itself. At last they were partly ready to meet the soldiers of De Broglie. The news came that though there were arms in the Bastille, they had been refused the defenders of the city. And so away went the crowd to the eastern part of the city, and gathered about the grim old castle-prison.

Originally the Bastille had been built just outside the city as a sort of castle, after the fashion of the Tower of London, to control the always uneasy populace. But as time passed, the city had grown about it, and it had ceased to be a fortress and had become the state prison. Within its dungeons had

been confined nearly every famous man France had produced, from Voltaire, for daring to challenge a noble, to Gabriel Riquetti Mirabeau, for not minding his irascible old father. Strange stories were told of dungeons far below the surface of the ground, into whose foul air no ray of light ever came, where men lived through generations not knowing whether wife and children still lived; of nameless tortures; of mysterious bones, by accident discovered by workmen. It is true we know to-day that few abuses attended the use of the Bastille during the reign of Louis XVI., and that its prisoners had been granted no small liberty, but the populace of Paris believed otherwise, and the great building had become the very symbol of oppression.

But hated though it was, and full of arms though it might have been, not a man of the crowd that rapidly gathered about its gates believed the Bastille could be captured. How was an unorganized mob, armed only with muskets and swords and pikes, to get over two drawbridges, and scale walls ten feet thick and ninety-six feet in height? Yet as the crowd filled the streets in the east end of Paris, swollen by additions from the lowest class of men as well as the artisans; as the governor, De Launay, refused to deliver up arms, the thought of capturing the huge building began to suggest itself. But how? One worthy locksmith declared, in the good old Roman fashion by the catapult. Monsieur Caussidiere, major-general of the Parisian militia, declared that it must be taken by siege. Santerre, a rich brewer, leader of the wild men from St. Antoine, planned to pump turpentine

and phosphorus from the fire-engines and set it on fire.[1]

Despairing of taking the place by storm, the crowd turned to deputations. A committee from the electors spent three hours in the fortress, but accomplished little. About ten o'clock in the morning, a single man, Thuriot de Larosiere, was admitted into the Bastille to speak with the governor. Unable to speak a word of German, he yet harangued the few Swiss soldiers who formed the garrison till they positively trembled. He told De Launay, in the name of a nation, to remove his cannon. De Launay promised that the cannon should not be used upon the people. Thuriot, coming out, begged the people to wait. But even as he was speaking the tragedy began. To enable Thuriot to pass, the drawbridge had been let down over the moat that separated the people from the outer court of the castle. The unarmed crowd, in search for weapons, rushed over it and stood in the so-called governor's court, just under the walls of the fortress. For some unknown reason the drawbridge was raised behind them. And then De Launay's men fired. Why, we shall never know.

Were it not for the white stones in the Place de la Bastille, outlining the building's great towers, were it not for the great bridges that span the Seine, whose stones once made the walls of that ancient prison, one could hardly believe that a people without cannon should have been able to capture a fortress, and that within a day. Yet capture is hardly the

[1]The pumps were actually brought, but unfortunately there was neither enough turpentine nor power in the pumps to carry half way up the sides of the building.

correct word. The Bastille was not taken; it surrendered. A wild firing, it is true, was kept up upon the building from roofs and street and square, but the defenders behind the thick walls suffered little. The situation of De Launay was by no means desperate. It is true some of the troops who should have dispersed the crowd were among his besiegers. But he had promises of help from Versailles, and he had but to wait a few hours. But his troops grew mutinous, and demanded that the impregnable building should surrender. De Launay was in despair. Rather than surrender, he determined to blow up the fortress, but was prevented, and then, in new despair, he yielded to the demands of his troops. The drawbridge of the castle was let down, the crowd rushed in, and the Bastille had fallen!

It is a pity that the story cannot end here, and yet as we look back upon it we see that it is hardly possible. A mob that had seen eight hundred and thirty-seven of its members apparently trapped and then shot down in cold blood; that had for hours been gathering to itself the scum of the slums; that had for hundreds of years been taught license in brutality and violence by the very building it had captured, could not let this victory pass without bloodshed. Hardly had the Swiss been taken from the walls than the promise of preserving their lives was broken, and an indiscriminate slaughter began. The bodies were horribly mutilated; the heads were placed upon pikes, and were carried in triumph by the howling crowd to the city hall. De Launay himself, in the midst of what protectors he could gather,

started toward the same place, but before he had reached a refuge the mob surged in upon him, beat him to the ground, and in a moment his head also was on a pike. The other deaths that followed need not be spoken of. The murders of Flesselles, Foulon, and Berthier were but the work of a half-crazed mob meting out "the justice of the people." The best men—and there were best men in the crowd that took the Bastille—had nothing to do with such actions. The murder of these men made it plain that in Paris on the 14th of July, 1789, the passion of the Parisian mob, be it never so bedecked with fine phrases, was brutal and anarchic, pregnant with every evil.

The fall of the Bastille was something more than the fall of a disused but hated prison. If one will go to the Museum Carnavallet in Paris he will see a host of mementos which testify to something more than a passing delirium. There are locks from the Bastille, doors from the Bastille, models of the Bastille made from its own masonry; Bastille fans, handkerchiefs, porcelains, pictures. And if one will read the memoirs of the time, he will find all Europe celebrating the event — Englishmen orating, Russians hugging one another, Germans weeping for joy. The explanation of all this enthusiasm lies in this: the fall of the Bastille was the symbol of the fall of Bourbon absolutism, the sign of the rise of a nation. For this reason is it that the 14th of July has been added to the list of national birthdays.

More immediately, also, the fall of the Bastille had important results. The *coup d'état* of the court party was ruined. Necker was recalled. The Count

d'Artois and the Polignac women fled from France. Large numbers of the court clique followed their example, and thus there came about the "First Emigration." The Duc de Liancourt was the first to break the news to Louis. "Why," said the king, "this is a revolt!" "No, your Majesty," replied the duke, "it is revolution." The king was startled into action. He recognized the assembly of the electors as the government of Paris, and the astronomer Bailly as mayor; he legalized the National Guard and placed La Fayette in command. He himself—for Louis had courage— partook of the sacrament and went to Paris. There he was received with honor by the new government of the city,[1] and, as a token of his good intentions, put on a red, white, and blue cockade.[2]

Other results were less happy. The discontent and violence that had appeared sporadically and locally throughout France, suddenly grew persistent and universal. The people rose through the country. Every place to which the news of the 14th of July came emulated the capital by attacking its local Bastille, the house of the feudal lord. Whether or not the riots were instigated by the Duke of Orleans, who was anxious to force Louis to abdicate, that he might be regent, will never be known certainly, although Orleans was undoubtedly capable of such a policy. But with whatever aid, the abused peasants turned upon their hereditary oppressors. The flogging of salt-agents, the extortion of the tax-gatherers, the

[1] It was while receiving Louis at the city gate that Bailly, who had been elected the first mayor of Paris, uttered the famous words, "Henry IV. reconquered his capital; now the capital has reconquered its king."

[2] The red and blue were the colors of Paris, and white was the color of the Bourbons.

miseries of the frog-marshes, all the horrors of feudal tyranny, were paid back stroke upon stroke. Yet it must be added that these uprisings were less violent where the peasantry was the more prosperous, and were sometimes directed against the custom-houses, and in general were less against the feudal lord than against feudal privilege. Often if a seigneur delivered up the books containing the records of the feudal dues, violence was avoided. But anarchy none the less reigned, and the ignorant masses went demented. July and August were months of the "great fear." Plots were suspected on all sides—brigands were always on the point of breaking in upon one's town or village; huge royalist syndicates were being formed to starve the people into submission by raising the price of grain; the Duke of Orleans was hiring rascals to terrify the people into loving him; royalists were blowing up patriotic citizens at lawn parties.[1]

If it be asked why the king and his ministers did not use military force and crush out this anarchy, it must be replied that there was no army to be trusted by the king. Throughout France the garrisons refused to obey royalist officers, and even De Broglie fled to Germany. And if it be asked why the Assembly did not check these disorders, the only reply can be that the Assembly neither had the ability nor the desire to use force. It was concerned with reducing the Rights of Man to formulas.

Thus in July, 1789, the two wings of the revolution united, the masses to reform by destruction, the

[1] In one case it was charged that this was actually done by one Mesmai at Vesoul, but the investigating committee of the Assembly reported without even raising such a suspicion.

National Assembly by political philosophy. In the meantime Louis hunted, the court emigrated, the ministers did nothing, Necker passed sleepless nights in writing financial statements, and the Assembly, to use Mirabeau's words, "spent months over syllables."

# CHAPTER XI

## THE END OF THE OLD RÉGIME[1]

I. The Fourth of August, 1789. II. New Problems. III. The Removal of the King to Paris: 1. Marat and the New Popular Leaders; 2. The Fifth and Sixth of October, 1789.

The fall of the Bastille and the attendant disorders throughout France were by no means the only important facts of the early months of the Revolution. Others are to be found quite as truly in the doings of the Assembly, which since the defeat of the court party was left to effect, without fear of violence, those reforms upon which France was determined. Nor should it for a moment be supposed that the Assembly was indifferent to public disorder. Yet its interests were more theoretical than administrative, and it contented itself with appointing a committee to report upon the condition of the nation.

While this committee was making its investigations, the Assembly devoted itself to drawing up the constitution it had sworn in the tennis-court to produce. It was a slow process, made all the more difficult by the lack of parliamentary procedure and the habit of delivering set speeches of indefinite length. First of all, came the question as to whether

[1] In general see Stephens, *French Revolution*, I, ch. 7; McCarthy, *French Revolution*, II, chs. 13-20; Taine, *French Revolution*, I, bk. i, ch. 4; Thiers, *French Revolution*, I, 80-114; Von Holst, *French Revolution*, II, ch. 7.

or not there should be a declaration of rights prefixed to the constitution. Deciding in the affirmative, the Assembly debated for weeks the matter of the rights of man and the citizen, meanwhile allowing the country to govern itself. Its passion for philosophical generalities quite unfitted the Assembly for legislation. Its members were masters of sentimental politics, but quite incapable of instituting reforms in such a way as to guarantee public peace. When abuses were destroyed, the very reform threw the country into deeper disorder. On the 4th of August the committee on the state of the nation reported, and a sad enough report did it make. Châteaux were burning all over France, millers had been hung, tax-gatherers drowned, warehouses and depots of the salt trade burnt. It was evening when the report was finished, and the Assembly listened at first in a sort of stupor to the terrible facts. Then enthusiasm amounting almost to hysteria seized its members. The liberal party had found its opportunity. Vicomte de Noailles rushed to the tribune. "What is the cause of the evil which is thus agitating the provinces?" he cried. It was, he showed, the fact that the people were uncertain whether or not the old feudal demands were still in force, and were determined to see that they were utterly destroyed. As one of the privileged orders, he proposed to abolish all feudal rights. His motion was seconded by D'Aiguillon, next to the king the greatest feudal lord in France, and passed in a frenzy of self-sacrifice. Noble after noble arose and proposed the abolition of their privileges. Rights of chase, rights of dovecote,

rights of tithes, special eligibility to office, all followed each other into oblivion. Many nobles beggared themselves in their enthusiasm. The clergy vied with the nobles. Decrees followed for the equalization of penalties; freedom of employment; the abolition of feudal justice, customs at the frontiers of the provinces, guilds, pensions and salaries, special privileges of towns and provinces, serfdom and mortmain.[1] And to crown it all, in an outgush of loyalty, Louis, who had been ignorant of the whole affair, was voted the Restorer of French Liberty!

To understand the significance of the night of the 4th of August it is necessary to remember that the Revolution is marked by a series of stages. The first period was not so much political as economic and social. The only attack was upon the relics of feudalism, not upon the state. The National Assembly aimed not at destroying the monarchy, but the unjust privileges under which France had so long suffered. And this first period culminated on the 4th of August. It is true hysterical legislation is always inexpedient. Sober thought, elementary parliamentary rules, would have prevented some of the decrees of that night. But even when all allowance is made, this much stands true: that hostility to privilege for which Turgot and Necker had stood unavailingly was converted into laws within a few hours. From that day to this France has never known a revival of the accursed condition that existed under the Old Régime. It makes little difference

[1]Compensation, however, was granted for certain of these privileges.

whether we say that the 4th of August destroyed privileges or simply declared them destroyed; in either case it outlawed them. And with them the Old Régime as a whole was outlawed. It is a pity we cannot say that it was dead and buried, but actually it was simply outlawed, and, like all outlaws, its hand was against the law that drove it forth, and its hopes lay in the undoing of the good work the Revolution had thus far accomplished.

During the few months following the fall of the Bastille, the local institutions of the Old Régime rapidly disappeared throughout the provinces. It was not merely that the peasants turned liberty into license.[1] In despair of protection from the regular army, the *bourgeoisie* organized spontaneously in companies of National Guards, into which went most of the militia. Gradually these National Guards throughout the country grew affiliated. Thanks to this new military force, order was partly restored, but this very success deepened the hatred of the insurgent peasantry; and in Dauphiné the struggle between the National Guards and the peasants amounted to civil war. In the towns, also, there was disorder; but a vigorous council, like that of Rouen, had no difficulty in suppressing riots and punishing their leaders. When the old local governments proved inefficient, new permanent municipal committees, composed largely of members of the *bourgeoisie*, sprang up, and as in the case of the National Guards, these improvised governments were soon in correspondence with each other. These new

[1] Arthur Young says a man's life was in danger from the number of peasants out gunning!

organizations were wholly independent of the Assembly, and illustrated not only the readiness with which the middle classes broke from the Old Régime, but also show how thoroughly nationalized the revolutionary spirit had become.

The problem of the workingman in the cities, however, had not been solved by the decrees of the 4th of August, nor had that of universal poverty. In fact, the Assembly was little concerned with such matters, questions of vested privilege and natural rights not being involved. Yet in the ignorant, hungry, half-frenzied proletariat of each city the *bourgeoisie*, which had destroyed the feudal and monarchical institutions, was to find its most inveterate enemy. As a matter of practical politics, the masses, intoxicated with the crudest ideas of liberty, should not have been neglected by the reformers; and this oversight on the part of the well-to-do deputies furnished the opportunity for radically democratic leaders, like Marat and Danton. The middle-class legislation of the National Assembly was to be followed by the ultra-democratic class legislation of the Jacobin period.

Thus the important elements in the revolutionary movement became distinct: the court, the Assembly, the *bourgeoisie*, the peasants, the masses of the cities, and especially the populace of Paris. For the moment, however, these were represented by two bodies, the Assembly and the court, each wishing to control the king. Had France in July, August, and September, 1789, been possessed of a strong government, quiet might have been restored, and the dark

days which were to follow might have been avoided. No mistakes had thus far been committed that a strong administration might not easily have corrected. The Revolution in August, 1789, deserved the enthusiasm it universally aroused; its only dangers lay in the undoing of its work. And this could be brought about only by its own indiscretions or by the success of the court.

As we look a little closer at France, it is evident that while it was likely that in its enthusiasm for humanity the Assembly might neglect administration, the danger from the court party was imminent. It would not have been human nature for persons who once had been possessed of all privileges to relinquish them immediately, because some of their fellows had been overtaken by a passionate generosity. And so it came about that from the 4th of August until the court party finally disappeared in the overthrow of the monarchy three years later, the history of the Revolution became a struggle between the parties of revolution and counter-revolution. Louis himself grew increasingly useless; but had the court—or let us say more accurately, had the queen—been able to see things exactly as they were, had she been ready to make use of La Fayette and Mirabeau, the two men who could and would have helped her, much conflict, much misery, might have been spared. But instead, the queen grew the more bitter in her opposition to the liberal movement, and events went on at Versailles much as before the flight of the king's friends; forgetting the effects of their first attempt, the court party began to plot a new *coup d'état.*

Their projects were not well hidden, and the popular leaders of Paris determined once and for all to bring the king away from the influence of the court, and establish him in his palace in Paris, where he would be a hostage against royalist attacks. Further, it was thought that if the Assembly were only in Paris it might be induced to come down from the thin air of deductive politics and consider the vulgar but more essential matter of the price of bread. Such a plan evidently involved many difficulties, for not only must the king be persuaded that such a transfer was necessary, but some energetic action must be taken to counteract the programme of the court party. And here, for the first time, we meet that use of the Parisian mob which later became so characteristic of the extreme revolutionists.

Since the fall of the Bastille, France, and especially Paris, had given birth to revolutionists far more ready than the deputies to champion the masses, and also to a rank sort of agitators, most of whom owned or edited journals. Chief among these latter was a Doctor Marat, a master of six languages, who had barely missed being elected a member of the Royal Academy of France, had been the court physician of the Count d'Artois, had achieved considerable reputation as an authority on light, electricity, and diseases of the eye, and the list of whose scientific publications fills three octavo pages.[1] Marat's interest in the masses was worthy of all his apologists say for him; but if he were a Wilberforce in theory, he was a

[1] Marat had one volume crowned by the Academy of Rouen, and another "approved" by the Royal Academy.

Nero in method. Before his assassination by Charlotte Corday in 1793, his mind weakened, his influence waned, and his demands for heads can hardly be regarded as anything more than half-maniacal ravings. In 1789, however, he was of rapidly increasing importance, notwithstanding he was on bad terms with La Fayette. He was possessed of a profound pity for the populace, a vast talent for suspicion and denunciation, a passionate hatred of the aristocracy; and all of these traits he reduced to type in one of the most eccentrically bloodthirsty sheets the world ever saw, *L'Ami du Peuple*.[1]

Marat[2] was soon to find his opportunity. On the 1st of October a portion of the new troops which had been summoned by the court arrived, and the officers of the body-guard at Versailles gave a supper in honor of the regiment from Flanders. The news of the arrival of this regiment, of course, was known in Paris, and served to arouse the worst apprehensions of the Parisians, and these apprehensions were turned into frenzy by the reports which came of the banquet. The agitators seized upon this orgy, as they called it: Paris was starving while the court was feasting; the red-white-and-blue cockades of the

[1] It is perhaps worth noticing that though he believed De Launay, Foulon, and Berthier worthy of death, he denounced their lynching as a violation of justice and an outrage of nature. It might be added that several of the worst numbers of his journal were forgeries issued by his enemies. During the last twelve months of Marat's life sixty-four persons had been guillotined. Not one of them had been denounced or mentioned by him. See Bougeart, *Marat*, II, 28*s* seq.

[2] On Marat see Stephens in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and *French Revolution*, I, 216–219. The traditional view of his character is that of Michelet, *French Revolution* (Bohn ed.), 535–551. His great apologist is Bougeart, *Marat, l'Ami du Peuple*, and his most laborious and appreciative biographer is Chèvremont, *Marat, Esprit politique*. See also Bowen Graves in *Fortnightly*, 1874, 2, and for socialist judgment, Bax, *Marat;* also in *Gentleman's Magazine*, New Series, XIX, 572.

people had been trampled under foot; the royalist song, "Richard, My King," had been sung by officers as they pledged health to the queen. Marat now comes into special prominence. On the 4th of October he seems to have gone to Versailles, and upon his return, Paris began to seethe. If the men had learned to respect the prowess of the National Guard, the women of the lowest classes, especially the market-women, had not. In accord with the plans of the agitators, whose tools they were, the women, and men dressed as women, collected themselves in different parts of the city, formed rude troops, impressed every woman they met, and began to march toward the City Hall. Companies of the National Guard—not those composed of *bourgeois*, but of men of the old army, who had been overtaken by the prevailing spirit—were drawn up to oppose them. "You will not fire upon women," they said, and threw themselves upon the soldiers' necks. As if in an opera bouffe, the soldiers capitulated. A quick-witted man by the name of Maillard, seeing that the women were capable of all mischief if left in Paris—they were just about to hang an unlucky clergyman—placed himself with a drum at the head of the procession, and led it away from the city towards Versailles, promising the women bread. It was a wild procession, this of the women, shouting, starving, mad with the wildest of revolutionary deliriums. A modern city would have dispersed it in short order, but when La Fayette succeeded in gathering the National Guard, he found his troops were bent upon bringing the king to Paris. Either sincerely or

for the sake of appearances, La Fayette endeavored to procrastinate; the soldiers were polite but determined, and at last the general, probably not quite unwillingly, put himself at the head of another procession and also marched to Versailles.

It is a good eight miles from Paris to Versailles, and when the crowd of hungry women reached the palace it was ready for sleep or for riot. It surged into the astonished and not altogether pleased Assembly,[1] demanding that the price of bread be lowered by law, and then, after sending a deputation to the king, found its way into the great court of the palace. For a few hours the situation, if critical, was not hopeless. Some of the crowd were drunk, and others attempted to satisfy hunger by roasting a horse that had chanced to be shot. At last La Fayette arrived with his troops, and after disposing them in churches for the night, thinking all was quiet, retired to get a few hours' rest after twenty-four of constant exertion. His fatigue can hardly excuse his negligence, for as day broke, under what provocation it is not known, the mob broke into the palace, and made for the queen's apartment, apparently bent on murder. Two of the Life Guards were thrown out of the windows to the greater mob below, where in a second their heads were off and on pikes. The queen was aroused just in time. Heroic guards,

[1] The Assembly played a curious rôle in the affair. The women crowded the galleries and told the deputies to "shut up," and shouted for "Mother Mirabeau." The president of the Assembly, Mounier, headed the deputation to the king, and in his absence one of the women sat in his chair. In the mean time some of the royalist deputies were flirting with the best-looking of the crowd. The desperate attempt of the Assembly to maintain its dignity can hardly be appreciated without reading the account of its proceedings in the *Moniteur* or the *Archives Parlementaires*.

at the risk of their lives, kept the inner doors of the palace closed until she went by a private staircase to the apartments of the king. This violence, however, was of but short duration, for La Fayette was able to bring about a return of order by means of his troops, and the wild night came to something like peaceful morning.

When morning came, the king appeared on the balcony, and was enthusiastically cheered when he promised to go to Paris. La Fayette led the queen and the dauphin upon the balcony, that the crowd might see her with a cockade in her hand. "No children!" howled the crowd, and the queen bravely stood out alone with the general. La Fayette gave her the tricolor cockade, bent and in the most chivalrous way kissed her hand. The crowd was pleased, and in a way subdued, and a few hours later Louis, with the queen and the children, started for the capital, never again to return to the grand palace of Louis XIV.

It was a third and wildest of all the processions of these two days[1]—women, men, body-guards, troops, La Fayette on his white horse, and the people from the slums surrounding the royal carriage, howling, "We have got the baker, and the baker's wife, and the baker's little boy. Now we shall have bread." And so they came to Paris and the shabby palace of the Tuileries.

The Assembly at Versailles, instead of acting like men, and punishing the authors of this shameful affair, yielded to mob law, voted that the king and the

[1] It is commonly said that the heads of the two murdered guards were borne on pikes in front of the carriage. La Fayette expressly denies this in his *Memoirs*.

Assembly were inseparable, and in its turn went to Paris. Quarters were prepared for it in one of the great riding-schools of the town, close by the royal palace of the Tuileries, and at last the capital had the king and the National Assembly in its own control. It was the guarantee that the Old Régime should not be restored.

La Fayette and the *bourgeois* government of Paris (Commune) were the immediate gainers by the transfer of the Assembly to Paris. The Duke of Orleans was driven to England, the Commune repressed popular uprisings, and La Fayette, for the moment the most powerful man in France, with the aid of the National Guard, brought something like quiet into the excited capital.

But the more sinister fact cannot be overlooked. Whether willingly or not, the municipal government of Paris, the commander-in-chief of the National Guard, the National Assembly, the king, had all been for the moment conquered by the proletarian mob, directed by demagogues. The end of such a triumph Mirabeau alone saw, and through La Marck, his friend at court, he urged Louis to leave Paris and establish himself and the Assembly in some smaller and more friendly city. The advice was timely but unheeded, and both Louis and the Assembly remained in a city not only suspicious, but naturally inclined to violence and brutality.

# CHAPTER XII

## THE REORGANIZATION OF FRANCE[1]

I. The Parties in the Assembly: 1. The Extreme Right; 2. The Right; 3. The Center; 4. The Left; 5. The Extreme Left. II. Mirabeau. III. The Work of the Assembly: 1. The Weakening of the Executive; 2. The Finances; 3. The Church; 4. The Military; 5. The Judiciary; 6. The Legislature.

The events of the 5th and 6th of October were followed by more than two years of at least outward comparative quiet. Yet no years of the Revolution were more critical and resultful. It was then that the constitution was produced; it was then that, as real government collapsed, the *bourgeoisie* lost its control of public opinion, and the entire nation came under the influence of radicals supported by the proletariat; and it was then that the forces were accumulated that made France a republic.

Before it is possible to understand the course of debates and executive decrees that resulted in the short-lived constitution of 1791, it is necessary to consider the parties in the Assembly. Their origin can be seen in the numerous differences in principles and interests that characterized the deputies, but their first real appearance was due to the debates over the purely constitutional question as to whether or not the

[1] In general, see Stephens, *History of the French Revolution*, I, chs. 8, 9, 10; Von Sybel, *French Revolution*, I, bk. i, ch. 5; bk. ii, ch. 3; Von Holst, *French Revolution*, II, ch. 7.

king should have the power of vetoing the acts of the Assembly. They were named from their position in the great Assembly hall in relation to the president. The Extreme Right, or Reactionist party, was composed of a hundred bishops and a few nobles. The nobility's leaders were D'Esprémesnil and the brother of the great Mirabeau, called, from his capacity to hold liquor, "the Barrel," while the leader of the bishops was the Archbishop of Aix. The party of the Right numbered from 200 to 250, and was composed of moderate men who favored a constitutional monarchy after the style of England, and was led by Mounier and Malouet until they were forced to resign their charge to abler hands. In the center of the hall sat about half the Assembly, who were practically neutral, and voted with either Right or Left, but were especially liable to be influenced by popular clamor. The Left was the most active division of the Assembly. It was composed of about the same number of delegates as was the Right, and included most of the young nobles who had served in America. Its most noted men were Siéyès, Talleyrand, La Fayette, but by the end of 1789 its leaders in the Assembly were Dupont, Lameth, and Barnave, the "triumvirate." Its plan was to cut loose from the past and at the same time maintain the monarchy. On the extreme left of the speaker sat a small body of radicals, completely under the influence of the philosophy of Rousseau. Chief among them were Robespierre, Pétion, and Buzot, all of whom were later to be of first importance. They had, however, little power within the Assembly, and turned to the clubs.

Besides these five parties, there was a single person who, belonging to neither, was yet the only man in the entire body who seemed capable of seeing things as they actually were, Mirabeau.

Gabriel Honoré Riquetti Compte de Mirabeau[1] was by all means the most important character in the first years of the Revolution, though less for what he accomplished than for what he attempted. His early years[2] had been made miserable by his own dissipations and his father's spectacular discipline. Throughout his life he was licentious, extravagant, and destitute of anything like ordinary moral consistency. Yet so vast was his nature that it would be incorrect to think of him as untrustworthy or utterly without moral principles.[3] There were, in fact, two Mirabeaus, the great animal who came into the Assembly with face still bleeding from the leeches his dissipations had made necessary, and the orator and statesman, the implacable enemy of anarchy and privilege, who swayed a hostile Assembly or club with his eloquence while, with Cassandra-like accuracy, he foretold the fatal results of mistakes he was

[1]The great works on Mirabeau are Loménie, *Les Mirabeau*, and Stern, *Das Leben Mirabeaus*. In English, the best study is that of Von Holst, *The French Revolution Tested by the Career of Mirabeau*. In addition, see Willert, *Mirabeau*, and the essays by Carlyle, Macaulay, and Reeves (*Royal and Republican France*). An interesting sketch is that of McCarthy, *French Revolution*, I, ch. 29. A sidelight upon the pre-revolutionary importance of Mirabeau is given by Fling, "Mirabeau and Calonne in 1785," *Am. Hist. Assoc.*, 1897, 131.

[2]The pre-revolutionary career of Mirabeau (1774-1789) cannot, unfortunately, be here considered, yet it was of sufficient importance to make him a leading factor in the development of the revolutionary spirit. See especially Fling, "Mirabeau, an Opponent of Absolutism," in *Nebraska University Studies*, II, No. 1 (July, 1894); "Mirabeau a Victim of the *Lettres de Cachet*," *Am. Hist. Rev.*, Oct., 1897.

[3]La Fayette himself gives him the credit of being true to his highest ideals for the nation, even when receiving a pension from the king.

unable to prevent. Unfortunately the two men were inseparable, and the better was hopelessly handicapped by the worse. So notorious were his marital affairs and his relations with his father that he was hissed when he first entered the States General, and he seems to have been suspected by all parties. None the less, his opposition to absolutism, his recognized ability as a writer upon all subjects of political importance, as well as his striking personality, had given him preëminence, and his boldness at the royal session and, far more, his speech in September in favor of Necker's proposed income tax gave him undisputed preëminence. He of all the deputies perceived how much reform was possible. Bitterly opposed to the Old Régime, he saw that France was incapable of republican government, and consequently wished only to change absolutism to constitutional monarchy. But his clear vision availed France almost nothing. Despite his increasing influence with the people and his position in the Assembly, he was neither able to induce La Fayette—whom he dubbed Cromwell-Grandison—to unite with him nor to form a coterie of followers. It is at this point that the chief criticism must be passed upon his political career. In large measure, it is true, this failure was due to the selfish, narrow spirit of the men to whom he appealed, but this is not the complete explanation; for if Mirabeau had the insight of the statesman, he too little trusted the organizing methods of the politician. His relations with the Assembly, on the whole, might almost be reduced to this: the Assembly did what Mirabeau knew it should

not do, and left undone the things that Mirabeau knew it should do.

The meetings of the Assembly were hopelessly disorderly. Mirabeau had laid before it a translation of Romilly's rules governing the House of Commons, but the Assembly wanted no aid from England. Instead of a few men meeting, like the Convention that drew up the American constitution, in secret, twelve hundred men discussed constitutional articles before three galleries filled with excitable crowds. Further, the presiding officer was changed every fortnight. Genuine debate there was little or none. A member had often literally to fight his way into the tribune, and once there he shouted and declaimed. At any minute the Assembly was liable to be swept off its feet by some passion. In the midst of a discussion on a national bank, excitable deputies took off their silver knee-buckles and threw them upon the table as a present to the state. Visitors and petitioners were always received. The proceedings were stopped to welcome a speech-making crowd of children, a newly married priest, or a liberated serf from the Jura a hundred and twenty years old. At one time the Assembly was fairly beside itself with enthusiasm as it received Baron von Clootz, who marched in at the head of a troop of men dressed like different nations, all come to salute new France in the name of the human species.

Yet through all confusion the Assembly kept steadily at its work of producing a constitution for new France. Here it was confronted by another difficulty. It rapidly assumed executive powers, and like the

second Continental Congress of America, was confronted with the double problem of producing a constitution and governing a distracted country. It was a fatal union, all the more inexcusable on the part of the Assembly, since it might have had the benefit of America's experience. Still another mistake did this overtaxed body make: it put its constitution into effect piecemeal. As fast as an article was adopted it was put into operation, and thus administration was misled by political metaphysics and constitutional provisions were precipitated by the desperate condition of the country. It is, in fact, impossible to discuss the constitution without at the same time considering the entire reorganization of France.

The fundamental principles which animated the Assembly need not be again set forth. They were carefully codified in the "Declaration of Rights of Man and of the Citizen" prefixed to the constitution, and embodied that teaching as to liberty and equality philosophers had popularized.[1] From any point of view the time spent upon this declaration might better have been spent upon more practical matters; but considering the unwieldy size of the Assembly, its disregard of parliamentary procedure, and its inexperience, one must admit that it might have done less, if not worse. As regards fundamentals, its work has never permanently been undone. Its destructive legislation was practically that imposed upon it by the *cahiers* of its members, and so far it was the true expression of the new spirit of the nation. It was in

[1] For example, liberty of the individual, security of property, safety of one's person, right to resist oppression, freedom of speech, of publication, and of religion.

accord with its principle of equality that free people of color were admitted to equal rights with whites, that all titles of nobility were abolished, and that an effort was constantly made to reverse the conditions of the Old Régime—often, indeed, to an altogether unwarranted extent, as in the matter of taxation of the land and the support of the proletariat by means of public workshops.

But dread of a continuance of absolutism was quite as influential as love of equality, and from the outset the Assembly was determined to weaken the power of the executive. Mirabeau and a few of the more sensible deputies were anxious for the king to have a veto power over the acts of the Assembly, but the populace and the great mass of deputies believed that to give him such power would be to make themselves "slaves again."[1] Under the influence of Necker, an unfortunate compromise was effected, by which the king was given a "suspensive veto," in accordance with which he could veto a bill, but if it was passed by the two legislatures following that by which it was presented it became a law.[2] Nor did the Assembly restrict itself to political theory. The executive department of the state had continued as before the States General, the ministers carrying on the various bureaus. Necker, though at the height of his popularity, was growing daily more incompetent, and the only two men of actual power were La Fayette, because of his command of the National Guards, and Mirabeau, because

[1] The public, who had never heard the word veto before, were thus enlightened by their leaders: "You are eating your soup. The king comes along and knocks the bowl from your hands. That is a veto."

[2] Sec. iii, art. 2, Tripier, *Constitutions qui ont regi la France depuis 1789*

of his position in the Assembly, Paris, and the provinces. Evidently the sensible plan would have been to form a coalition ministry, of which La Fayette and Mirabeau, if not Necker, should be members. This Mirabeau attempted, and in the face of the suspicion of the court and the supercilious attitude of Necker and La Fayette, nearly accomplished. But the Extreme Right and the Extreme Left were bitterly jealous of him; the less radical deputies were hysterically individualistic and in terror of "slavery"; and the eyes of the entire Assembly were closed to the need of anything except general principles. As a result, in its determination to maintain its independence during the time of constitution-making, the Assembly voted (November 7th) that no deputy should be allowed to receive office from the king. This decree was directly aimed at Mirabeau, and it resulted in ruining every possibility of his becoming a minister. With this exclusion disorder was guaranteed,[1] and unwittingly the deputies had destroyed the monarchy, and had made strong government in France possible only under terror.

More beneficial, but hardly less *doctrinaire*, was the constitutional provision for the administration of the nation. The provinces and intendances were abolished, and France was divided into eighty-two (or eighty-three including Corsica) departments, each divided into nine districts, each district into ten cantons, and each canton into ten municipalities.[2] The

[1] Mirabeau repeatedly urged the king to bring about the repeal of this fatal vote, but to no purpose. It is generally believed that its passage was due to the influence of Necker and La Fayette.

[2] These were the ideal numbers. Actually there were 83 departments, 574 districts, 4,730 cantons, 44,000 communes.

department and each of its subdivisions were to have their proper officers, each to be elected, the electoral process being very elaborate.[1] Each department was to have at its head a *procureur-général-syndic*, each district a *procureur-syndic*, each canton and department a *procureur*. Each division had also its appropriate judiciary. Each commune, or town government, further, had charge of its own companies of the National Guard, and in other ways exercised really sovereign powers. In its reaction from Bourbon centralization the Assembly had practically destroyed all national government, and broken France up into little democracies. But this was not all; every officer, judge, and council in every administrative division was to be elected, and any citizen who did his duty must needs appear every few weeks at the polls. The *bourgeois* influence was also felt, for citizens were divided into two classes, the *active*—i. e., those who paid taxes equal to three days' wages; and the *passive*, or those who did not pay such tax. The franchise was limited to the active citizens, and a considerable property qualification was set for all officials. Thus in theory the responsible citizens were in control of the state. In fact, few persons were really refused the franchise, and the property qualification became only a source of class hatred. The great powers this administrative system would give a municipality, and especially a great city like Paris, are at once evident. Its commune would be a practically independent gov-

[1]The officers of the municipality and canton were to be elected by the active citizens of the municipality and canton, respectively; but the officers of the district and department were to be elected by an electoral college chosen by the citizens of the department.

ernment, controlling its own troops, more than able to confront the officers of the department to which it belonged, and certain to demand special recognition from the Assembly.

The financial expedients of the Assembly were, on the whole, temporizing and injurious. From the first it had faced the financial problem unwillingly, but the deficit was growing steadily, and on August 7th Necker informed the Assembly that practically no taxes had been collected for three months.[1] He wished the Assembly to sanction a loan of $6,000,000 at five per cent, for which he had made provision. The Assembly sanctioned the loan, but blindly changed the rate to four and one-half per cent. The loan consequently was not taken up. Three weeks later Necker attempted to float a loan of $16,000,000 at five per cent, but failed. Then the state lived on gifts for a few weeks, but September 29th Necker proposed an income tax of twenty-five per cent, to be paid within three years, the citizen himself simply declaring his income. The scheme was preposterous, but Mirabeau supported it as a last resort, and it was voted. But to no purpose. Taxes could not be collected in a state in which the executive had practically been annihilated. In November, Necker proposed that the collection of the taxes should be handed over to *Caisse d'Escompte*, or Department of Loans, which should advance a fixed sum. Mirabeau opposed this plan, and it amounted to nothing. The financial stringency was increased by the nobles and

[1] In June the Assembly had declared that existing taxes should be paid provisionally until new laws were passed. Naturally the people did not pay provisional taxes.

wealthy *bourgeois* exporting their specie to London, and by the various relief schemes which were being carried on by Paris. The capital was spending $32,000 a month on public workshops, and in January and February lent $3,400,000 to the masses to buy food, all of which it borrowed from the national treasury. In fact, the socialistic tendency was marked, and the masses were being supported in large part by the municipality. Its need, in turn, reacted upon the Assembly, for the only hope of national quiet lay in the quiet of Paris, and this had to be bought.

During this period of financial desperation the Assembly had nationalized the royal domain, and in October confiscated the real estate of the church, and then ordered the sale of $80,000,000 worth of its land.[1] In November, Mirabeau suggested the issuing of scrip with this land as collateral, and on March 17, 1790, the Assembly voted to issue the first *assignats*. The plan was very simple, and had no further paper money been issued, perfectly sound. Eighty million dollars of paper money were issued in interest-bearing notes, and these were to be received at their face value in payment for the church lands. At first the *assignats* circulated at par, but in a few weeks speculators in the church lands had forced them down ten per cent, and even then the municipalities to whom the Assembly had assigned the selling of the lands within their limits, kept the *assignats* and sent their own worthless bonds to the national treasury.[2] The government

[1] Talleyrand was probably the real author of the scheme.

[2] The shameless dishonesty of some patriots is also seen in that after making the first payment in assignats, by which they were given possession of the lands, they cut off the timber and decamped before the second installment became due.

really was benefited but little by the transaction, and within a few months found itself in new straits. So terrible did a declaration of bankruptcy seem to Mirabeau, that through his influence (September 27, 1790) the Assembly voted an additional issue of $160,000,000 of *assignats*, though with the solemn assurance that the sum then in circulation ($240,000,000) should not be exceeded. But the descent into the Avernus of fiat money is easy. By June, 1791, the issue of September had been used, and the state was again in need. One hundred and twenty million dollars more were issued, much of the sum being in five-franc notes, whereas formerly fifty-franc had been the smallest denomination. The result was to people France with speculators. The very peasant was unable to tell the value of the crop he raised. Patriotism has seldom, if ever, withstood an opportunity to grow rich at the expense of the country for which one is ready to die, and every purchaser of state or church land, looking forward to future payments on the same, was anxious to depreciate the value of the *assignats*. Specie left the country; trade, at first brisk, diminished; and France was soon tasting all the miseries of a hopelessly depreciated currency.[1]

This financial history was but the reverse side of the Assembly's ecclesiastical policy. On the whole, this was markedly generous. After nationalizing the property of the church, it agreed to pay its debts ($30,000,000), and while dissolving the monasteries

[1] Altogether during the Revolution 48,000,000,000 francs of assignats were issued. See White, *Paper Money in France;* Walker, *Money*, 336-347; Blanc, *History of the French Revolution*, bk. xiv, ch. 3; Dillaye, *Money and Finances of the French Revolution;* Stourm, *Les Finances de l'Ancien Regime et de la Révolution*, II, 277-329.

and seizing their property, it agreed to pension the monks and nuns. The state undertook to support all the clergy from the taxes, reducing greatly the salaries of the bishops and increasing those of the curates. The bishops were hereafter to be considered as the servants of the state, paid by the state. The salaries, according to the importance of the bishopric, were to vary from $2,500 to $10,000 a year. The curates were to have from $1,200 to $2,400 a year, besides a house and garden. There was much justice in this; but the position taken by the Assembly in regard to the political position of the clergy was full of danger. It involved two specific provisions. There was to be but one bishop for a department and one curate for each commune, each to be elected and to take an oath to support the yet uncompleted constitution. This practically amounted to a break with the Pope. If bishops were to be elected by their parishioners, and if they were to be simply the civil functionaries of the state, the organization of the church was evidently at an end. Thus by the end of the first year since the States General the Catholic clergy had ceased to monopolize religion, had ceased to be a privileged order, had ceased to be feudal lords, had ceased to be subject to the Pope.[1]

It was inevitable that resistance should be made to such radical changes. The bishops refused to take the civic oath, and July 24, 1790, a law was passed that unless the oath were taken no priest or bishop should remain in office. Only four bishops took the oath. It was but natural, therefore, that a bull of

[1] See Debidour, *L'Eglise et l'Etat en France*, pt. i, chs. 1, 2.

April 13, 1791, should denounce this civil constitution of the clergy, as based on heretical principles, and that as a result, good Catholics should regard the services of all civic priests as without efficacy in birth, marriage, and death. In Alsace a petition against the nationalization of the church estates was signed by twenty-one thousand persons, including Lutherans and Jews as well as Catholics. In this case the opposition was doubtless economic, as the sale of the church lands was sure to injure the tenant-farmers. But in other parts of France religious sympathies were more in evidence, and so anarchic was the nation that miniature religious wars broke out in several cities. Later, the attempt to enforce the civil constitution of the clergy in the Vendée gave rise to a great uprising against the revolutionary government.

These and other disorders showed plainly the untrustworthy condition of the entire military force. It has already appeared that after the fall of the Bastille the *bourgeois* class throughout France began to form the so-called National Guards. Under the constitution this military force was firmly established, both as a reserve and as a militia to maintain order. But the regular army was still in existence, and the Assembly proceeded to reform it. This was all the more imperative since the men were now under the influence of the current thought about equality, and demanded that they as well as other men should have a share in the new order of things. The Assembly therefore raised the pay of the soldiers, opened the rank of commissioned officers to all classes, and itself assumed control of the entire military establish-

ment, leaving to the king the right to appoint only the commander-in-chief and the marshals. Had some way been devised by which discipline could be reëstablished, these military reforms would have been very beneficial; as it was, however, with the exception of the Swiss and German mercenaries, the entire army grew insubordinate, suspicious of its officers, and generally more in need of being guarded than capable of maintaining order.

With the judiciary, perhaps, the Assembly was more successful. The Parlements were abolished, local courts were authorized in every administrative division, with appeals from the lower to the higher. Juries were to try all criminal cases. In accordance with the general passion for voting, all judges and juries were to be elected. A new institution was the establishment of a high court to try cases of treason.

Finally, as regards the legislative body of the nation, the Assembly decided that it should have but one chamber, its members to be elected by the different departments. The absence of a second chamber made hasty legislation easy, and this fact, when coupled with the impracticable suspensive veto, was calculated to lead to friction between the legislative and the executive branches of the government. This over-emphasis upon legislation which the constitution of 1791 everywhere shows was only a reflection of the dominating spirit of the Constituent Assembly. It believed men could be made happy and the nation orderly by proclamations and laws. It was this belief, born of the enjoyment of new privileges and the remembrance of former "slavery," that explains the

Assembly's disregard of administration, of discipline in the army, and severe repression of disorder among the peasantry. If ever a strong government is needed, it is when a country is just experiencing the intoxication of new liberties, but this, as we have seen, was the one thing the Assembly was unable, even unwilling, to give France. In this as in other particulars it accurately represented the philosophical, idealistic temper of the class of society from which it was elected. But like all idealists, it could not see that it was confronted by facts and not theories; by Frenchmen and not natural men. Its principles were noble; the men it would benefit were unprepared to live nobly; individualism was carried to extremes; repressive government was judged unworthy of the new age. And in these facts lay the explanation of the next phase of the Revolution.[1]

[1] The different estimate placed upon the work of the Assembly by open-eyed contemporaries is to be seen in Rabaut St. Etienne, *French Revolution;* Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution*, and the running commentary of Mirabeau in his papers sent La Marck and Montmorin. Popular anticipations are to be seen in Arthur Young, *Travels.*

# CHAPTER XIII

## THE PROGRESS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT[1]

I. The Festival of the Confederation, July 14, 1790. II. Mirabeau and the Court. III. The Activity of Radical Revolutionists. IV. Forces Making toward Radicalism: 1. State Socialism; 2. The Jacobin Club; 3. The Cordelier Club; 4. The Indifference of the *Bourgeoisie* to Voting; 5. The Death of Mirabeau; 6. The Flight of the King; 7. The "Massacre of the Champs de Mars." V. The End of the Constituent Assembly.

On February 4, 1790, Louis unexpectedly came to the Assembly, and after a short speech intended to offset certain suspicions as to a proposed flight, in his own name and that of the queen and his young son solemnly took the civic oath to abide by the new order of things. The Assembly was raised to a high pitch of loyal enthusiasm, and with great cheering voted the king its thanks. But his oath suggested similar action, and every deputy came forward and in his turn took the civic oath; then the substitute deputies, the galleries, the crowd about the doors, all took the same oath, until the building fairly trembled with shouts of "I swear it." From the Assembly the oath passed through Paris, and from town to town over all France. Never was the spirit of the country more heartily loyal and hopeful, and the Assembly determined that

[1] In general, see Stephens, *French Revolution*, I, chs. 11, 14, 15; Taine, *French Revolution*, II, bk. iv, chs. 1, 2; Von Holst, *French Revolution*, II, chs. 10–12.

the first anniversary of the fall of the Bastille should be celebrated on a gigantic scale as a national festival of confederation.

Thousands of persons of all classes worked furiously to arrange seats of turf in the great Champs de Mars. Invitations were sent out to all the departments to send delegates. Enthusiasm redoubled as these representatives began to arrive in the city, and when July 14, 1790, arrived, rainy though it was, four hundred thousand persons and sixty thousand troops were assembled. In the midst of the great field stood an altar upon a base twenty-five feet high. And there, surrounded by three hundred priests, Talleyrand[1] performed mass, accompanied by the booming of cannon. La Fayette, as commander of the National Guards, received the form of oath from the king, carried it to the altar; and then the soldiers, the deputies, the king, with arms outstretched, took the oath. The queen held out the little dauphin to the people, and the vast company burst into shouts of wildest enthusiasm. At the same moment all over France smaller bodies of citizens were stretching out their arms and swearing the same oath. That night Paris was illuminated, and people danced on the spot where the Bastille had stood a year before, the symbol of a now departed absolutism. No other nation could or would have undertaken such a celebration, but to France it seemed as if liberty was at last achieved, and all suspicion of the king's sincerity was stilled. Had Louis but accepted Mirabeau's advice, and from that moment energetically put himself at the head of

[1] "Don't make me laugh," he said to La Fayette.

the new national movement, there can be little doubt the nation's loyalty would never have been less.[1]

This celebration of July 14, 1790, not only shows how thoroughly national the Revolution was, but it marks the acme of its idealistic phase. If we except the details to be formally incorporated in the constitution during the succeeding months, all benefits had been done France that were to be permanent. Absolutism, privileges, unjust taxation and feudal dues, the provincial divisions, the parlements, all had forever disappeared, and there was left to king and courtiers simply the duty of accommodating themselves to the new condition of affairs. The problems left were at bottom administrative, and the fact that Mirabeau was giving advice might have been a basis of help.[2] For several months he had been coming more into touch with the king. In a full statement of his political belief he had declared his persistent devotion to royalty and his determination to aid it as the one means of restoring tranquillity to the nation, but on the sole condition that the king should sincerely and without reservation accept the reforms accomplished and put himself at the head of a constitutional government. It was with no disloyalty, therefore, to his original principles that he secretly accepted a large

[1] Illustrations of the loyalty of the departments are numerous. As the deputies from the departments were presented to Louis, the leader of those from Brittany knelt and presented Louis his sword, saying: "I place in your hands the faithful sword of the Bretons; it shall only be reddened by the blood of your foes." Louis raised and embraced him, and returned the sword, saying: "It can never be in better hands than in those of my brave Bretons. I have never doubted their loyalty and affection; assure them that I am the father and brother, the friend of all Frenchmen." "Sire," replied the deputy, "every Frenchman loves, and will continue to love you, because you are a citizen-king." Carlyle has a most vivid account of this celebration.

[2] To understand the true relations of Mirabeau with the court, see *Correspondance entre Mirabeau et La Marck*. This correspondence, also, is invaluable as a running commentary on the course of the Revolution.

pension from the king, and repeatedly counseled the representative of the court as to the proper course of conduct. The details of the plans varied according to the circumstances of the day, but their main purpose was to prevent counter-revolution, to lead Louis to see the real benefits of the destructive work of the Assembly, and, especially at first, to induce him to make the government less Parisian by leaving the capital and establishing himself and a new Assembly, supported by the departments, in some city where the pressure of the mob would be removed.

By no advice, however, could Mirabeau accomplish anything, because of the insincerity of the queen, the inertia of the king, the jealous puritanism of La Fayette, and the incapacity of Necker. The latter, indeed, resigned, and retired to Switzerland in September, 1790, but the other sources of difficulty remained. In the face of Mirabeau's warnings, reaction grew more open. The Right in the Assembly urged on extravagant legislation in order to bring the Assembly into disrepute; the clergy preached against the sacrilege done the church; the nobility constantly left the kingdom for other countries, there to excite Europe against the Assembly, and if possible to secure troops with which to reinstate the Old Régime; the officers of the standing army grew hostile to the government they had sworn to serve; the clergy of Jalès organized against the government, and their league was to grow into a secret confederation against the new ecclesiastical legislation; England seemed on the point of involving the country in a war through its quarrel with Spain, the ally of France, over Nootka

Sound; and the attitude of Germany and Austria justified apprehension. The practical question was, as Mirabeau saw, who should control and direct the masses of the departments. Those of Paris might safely be trusted to attain slowly to sobriety under the influence of the National Guard and La Fayette.

But Mirabeau's words were unheeded. This appeal to the nation the court would not make. The inaction was fatal. While the nobility were hoping for some miraculous undoing of the New Régime, and the *bourgeoisie* grew complacently indifferent to strong government, the Extreme Left was organizing public opinion throughout the masses of the entire nation. And when this spirit had once expressed itself at the polls, a new revolution had begun.

This new radicalism may be traced directly to that revolutionary spirit whose steady growth has already been noticed. It was incipiently socialistic, in that men had come to hold that the state should aid the municipalities, maintain public workshops for the benefit of the unemployed, and by the latter part of 1790 these establishments and their beneficiaries had become so numerous as to constitute a severe tax upon the well-to-do classes. The influence of the municipalities is also seen in the legislation of the Assembly. The explanation of the abolition of certain indirect taxes and the retention of others lies almost entirely in their bearing upon the cities, and above all upon Paris. In fact, the Commune of Paris practically dictated the fiscal policy of the Assembly.

Back of the new spirit of the masses lay the work

of the Society of the Friends of the Constitution, better known as the Jacobin Club. In 1789, while the Assembly was still in Versailles, a body of what were then rather extreme liberals began dining together for the purpose of discussing the policy of reform. It was first known as the Breton Club, and afterward as the Society of the Friends of the Constitution, and included many distinguished men, among them La Fayette, Talleyrand, and Mirabeau. After the Assembly went to Paris, the club met in a small room and, later, in the library of a monastery belonging to the Dominicans, known popularly as the Jacobins, because of their church of St. James. This nickname passed to the club. In Paris it rapidly grew less moderate. The leaders of the Extreme Left, who were too few and advanced to have influence in the Assembly, soon became the most important among its members through their great earnestness and their popularity among the masses. By the end of 1790 the Jacobins numbered more than a thousand members, and had ceased to be merely a debating club, but were seeking to influence the populace of Paris. In 1791 La Fayette and the more moderate members withdrew, to form the short-lived and ineffective club of the Feuillants, and men like Robespierre were left in full control.[1] Similar clubs were formed throughout France. In every municipality the citizens, no longer the indifferent persons described by Arthur Young, met to discuss the matters which busied the Assembly, and to express their views by votes. Their

[1] On the Jacobin Club, by far the most important work is Aulard, *La Société des Jacobins.*

information came through the Parisian newspapers, which by 1791 had attained a vast circulation and consequent influence. At the outset these clubs were under the control of the well-to-do classes, and in fact were seldom if ever led by members of the proletariat. In the course of time, however, the more conservative element tired of perpetual discussion, and gradually withdrew. The control of the clubs then passed to young lawyers who embraced the cause of the masses and soon became as hostile to the *bourgeoisie* as to the aristocracy.

All these clubs were profound admirers of the Jacobin Club of Paris, and by the beginning of 1791 were gradually affiliating with that body. Through these confederated clubs the radicals of Paris rapidly acquired the control of the voting bodies of all the municipalities of France, and were able so to unify political action as in a measure to anticipate the modern political party. The general program of the affiliated clubs was based upon popular sovereignty, and, by degrees, became hostile to monarchy as an institution.

Almost as influential in Paris, though far less so in the departments, was the Cordelier Club. Its name, like that of the Jacobins, was derived from a monastery in which its meetings were held. From its inception it was radical, its members including Danton, Marat, Camille Desmoulins, Hébert, Legendre. All these men were opposed to compromise, and were anxious to destroy every vestige of the Old Régime, monarchy as well as feudalism.[1]

[1]It should not be overlooked that the Jacobin and the Cordelier were by no means the only clubs in Paris. Nor were all clubs composed of radicals. There were the Club of 1789, composed of moderate men like La

This supremacy of the more violent revolutionists in the clubs was part of a process through which the entire nation was passing. After the enthusiasm of July 14, 1790, the majority of Frenchmen believed further attention on their part to affairs of state was not needed; they had won their cause, and were content now to let government manage itself. Thus the "sovereign people" rapidly resolved itself into an aggressive minority, composed of the lower classes, managed by Jacobins.[1] It is safe to say that at any moment in the Revolution this minority could have been defeated, and that in 1791 its political power could have been destroyed if the other elements of society had gone to the polls.[2] As it was, this minority was made increasingly violent, not alone by journalists like Desmoulins and Marat, and such Jacobins as Robespierre and Pétion, but also by thoroughly brutal men, like Santerre and Hébert in Paris and a multitude of local leaders throughout the departments. There the struggle between the local Jacobins and the order-loving *bourgeoisie* was more violent and more often marked by bloodshed than in Paris, where the

Favette, Siéyès, and Talleyrand; the Feuillant Club, composed of deputies who had seceded from the Jacobins; the non-partisan Club of Valois; the royalist Monarchical Club, which, however, was suppressed as soon as it attempted to win the masses by supplies of food. But none of these clubs were of anything like the importance of the Jacobin and Cordelier.

[1] Taine, *French Revolution*, II, 31, 32, gives authorities and figures. In Paris, in August, 67,200 voters out of 81,400 did not vote, and three months later the absentees numbered 71,408. In the departments the disparity is far greater. At Grenoble 2,000 of the 2,500 registered voters did not appear at the polls, and even fewer at Limoges. Even when persons were chosen members of the electoral college, they did not take the trouble to perform their duties. Of 946 Parisian electors only 200 voted; and again in the departments the same neglect is to be observed.

[2] This conclusion is supported by these figures: In Paris, out of more than 81,000 registered voters, only 6,700 voted for Pétion as mayor, yet he received the majority of the votes cast. In 1792, he was elected by about 14,000 out of 160,000 registered voters. The case was similar in the departments. See Taine, *French Revolution*, II, 46.

National Guard had come to be feared. The establishment of royalist or conservative clubs was nearly always followed by riots. Mobs frequently lynched men suspected of being "aristocrats," and at Aix their victim was the *procurateur-général-syndic* of the department. In Avignon[1] the Jacobins, under a wagoner named Jourdan, massacred sixty-one persons and threw their bodies into the tower of the Glacière.[2] Even worse acts of violence occurred in the colonies, and especially in San Domingo, where the negroes rose against the whites.

Mirabeau himself seems to have felt the pressure of the new spirit, for during the last months of his life his speeches in the Assembly were on a plane distinctly nearer that of the demagogue.[3] This change may be ascribed both to the temper of those who prepared his speeches—for Mirabeau frequently delivered those he himself had not written, and at least in one case had not even read over—and to his later and questionable policy of discrediting the Assembly in order to bring about a partial reaction in favor of the monarchy. But neither is the complete explanation. There

[1] Avignon had been the home of the Popes during the so-called Babylonish Captivity in the fourteenth century, and at the time of the Revolution it was still under the papal legate. The French Jacobin party was in the minority, but gathered a mob of bloodthirsty peasants and under the direction of Jourdan inaugurated a reign of terror, but order was restored by the National Guard. Then began a miniature civil war between the citizens who wished to remain subject to the Pope and those who wished to unite Avignon to France. By the summer of 1791 commissioners appointed by the Constituent Assembly advised that the union be permitted and that troops be sent to maintain order. Through the inefficiency of the ministry these did not arrive promptly.

[2] Jourdan returned to Avignon and lived unmolested until July, 1794, when he was guillotined by the deputy on mission as a moderate republican!

[3] For the most important of the speeches of Mirabeau and the other orators of the Revolution, see Stephens, *The Orators of the French Revolution;* on the question of the authorship of those of Mirabeau, see Aulard, *Les Orateurs de la Constituante*, 130-170.

was in addition the necessity of using the Jacobins. "Ill-fated nation!" he wrote in December, 1790, "to this hast thou been brought by some men, who have supplanted talent by intrigue and conceptions by commotions." At the time he wrote these words he was president of the Jacobins, and was evidently fighting for strong government with the weapons of demagogues. How far he was from approving the radicalism of the club appears from the fact that February 28, 1791, he was forced to defend himself at one of its sessions because of his having opposed a high-handed law against emigration; but affairs were in such a condition that, as his opponent, Lameth, said in his attack upon him at the club, only from the midst of the Jacobins could he wield the lever of opinion.

Yet even thus the case was nearly hopeless for a man suspected of having been bought by the king,[1] and we can only speculate as to what would have been his influence in 1792. That he could have stopped the drift toward a republic and the despotism of popular leaders is not probable. In 1794 friendship with him was one of the charges that brought Danton to the guillotine. Perhaps it was fate's one kindly act in his strangely resultless life that he died before the great struggle over the monarchy really opened.

To the last he strove to accomplish the impossible. The court apparently counted him as simply one enemy bribed to silence. La Fayette would not soil himself by any combination with him; the Jacobins hated him

[1] Newsdealers were selling on the streets of Paris a pamphlet, "The Great Treason of the Count of Mirabeau."

for his moderation; the Assembly rejected his sane proposals, and adopted only those in which he temporized with demagogism; Montmorin, minister of foreign affairs, alone appreciated his clear vision, and practically allowed him as a member of the diplomatic committee of the Assembly to manage the foreign relations of the state. His early death, like his political failure, came on April 2, 1791, as a penalty of his dissipations. He was buried with immense pomp in the Pantheon; but less than three years later his body was removed to make room for that of Marat.

The months that followed were filled with attacks upon royalty, occasioned by the new opportunities given the Extreme Left by the death of Mirabeau and by the threatening attitude of Europe. Two great camps of *émigrés* nobles were forming just over the frontier, at Coblentz and Worms, and at a secret conference held in Mantua, May 20, 1791, Austria, Prussia, the smaller German states, Spain, Switzerland, and even England, agreed in vague terms to come to the help of the king. The Assembly knew little or nothing of these plans, but instinctively suspected the queen of treachery, and persisted in its reduction of the royal power.

Its suspicions were, on the whole, justified, for Louis was making plans to escape to Bouillé, who was in charge of the military force of Lorraine, there to put himself at the head of civil war. Even in this he was not unsuspected. On the 18th of April, 1791, he had undertaken to drive out to St. Cloud in order to celebrate mass. But the crowd thought he was planning to escape, and for twelve hours thronged about

the carriages, preventing their moving, and Louis had to give up his plan. But the insult, as well as the revelation of his condition, stung him, and he yielded to the entreaties of his friends, and determined to flee in real earnest. Through a Russian lady a large traveling-carriage was ordered and passports taken out, and on the night of June 21st the king and queen were spirited out of Paris in cabs and started for the frontier in the great coach, the queen as the Russian lady and Louis as her valet.[1] The plan was desperate at the best, but was rendered even more so by the queen's preparatory dressmaking, her demands for maids and a bathtub, and by the king's refusal to go by the most direct roads in some faster conveyance than the great coach. Bouillé, however, arranged his troops at the proper place; a charming adventurer, Count Fersen, arranged all details in Paris—which no one seemed bright enough to carry out—and for several days France was without a king. Indeed, it was also in a sort of legal anarchy, for before leaving Paris Louis drew up a paper in which he withdrew his signature to various bills on the plea that it had been obtained by force. But the flight proved a succession of blunders. The fugitives traveled so slowly that Bouillé thought the plan had been abandoned, and did not meet them at the appointed place. At the little town of Sainte Menehould Louis put his head out of the window, and was recognized; at Varennes

[1] If the plan is in any way traceable to the old advice of Mirabeau, nothing could have been less in accord with his purpose. Carlyle's account of this flight is inaccurate in details, but a piece of marvelous writing. For the sober facts of the case, see Oscar Browning, *The Flight to Varennes*. Briefer accounts are in McCarthy, *French Revolution*, II, chs. 32–35; Stephens, *French Revolution*, I, ch. 15.

the party was stopped; the troops, who were near by, were unable or unwilling to render aid, and the unhappy fugitives in their disguises were kept prisoners in the home of the mayor, over his grocery-shop, and finally taken back to Paris by the National Guards and representatives of the Assembly.[1]

From one point of view, it seems as if it would have been the part of wisdom for the French people to let Louis escape; they would have had one less complication with which to deal; they would not have been obliged to kill him. But looked at from another side, it was exceedingly fortunate for France that the king did not escape, and become a nucleus point for disaffection and counter-revolution. France in 1791 was less ready to withstand invasion than in 1792. And the success of the invader would have meant the undoing of the work of the Assembly and the punishment of its leaders.

Considered simply historically, we find that this attempted escape of the king cost him the confidence of the nation. It is true that he was received in Paris without insult, and that when, a few months later, he accepted the constitution he regained in a way the love of his people. But the tide was running out too fast for Louis ever again, with his vacillating, commonplace nature, to hold the love of the nation. From the day of this flight toward, even if not to, the enemies of France, the monarchy was doomed.

It is no mere coincidence that the final separation

[1] One of these representatives, the Jacobin Barnave, was so charmed by the queen that he lost his former enthusiasm for the Revolution, retired to private life, and was subsequently guillotined as a reactionist.

of the Parisian *bourgeoisie* from the masses is to be placed at almost the same time as this self-inflicted blow to monarchy. The two were results of the same rapidly developing spirit. For months La Fayette had been endeavoring to maintain order in the turbulent capital, and at his request the Assembly had decreed that in case of a more than usually dangerous disturbance a red flag should be hung from the Hôtel de Ville, the riot act read thrice, and then if the mob did not disperse, the troops were to fire. No occasion for such drastic measures arose until after the return of the king from Varennes. At that time Danton, a man in many respects like Mirabeau, and one who was to play a great part in the next period of the Revolution, seeing that the Assembly was incapable of good government, and hating monarchy as an institution, proposed at the Cordelier Club a popular petition for the removal and trial of Louis. The Cordeliers (and Jacobins as well) approved the plan, and despite the orders of Bailly, the mayor of Paris, the petition was drawn up, and on July 17, 1791, laid on the great altar in the Champs de Mars for signature. The Parisian crowd was charmed, and the great field was alive with men and women, half-anxious to sign the petition and half-curious to see whether Bailly really would live up to his threat and disperse them. Everything went quietly until a couple of men were found under the platform. Their explanation for their presence was not convincing, and the crowd immediately suspected they were agents of some diabolical royal gunpowder plot, and tore them to pieces. A riot

ensued, and the mob refused to disperse. Whereupon the red flag was displayed, the riot act read by Bailly, and the National Guard ordered to fire upon the crowd. As a result, a number of persons were killed or injured. In itself this affair does not appear important, but its influence was lasting. It was not merely that republicanism had appeared. The National Guard was composed of members of the *bourgeoisie*, the crowd of the masses; and this "Massacre of the Champs de Mars" became the watchword of a new and murderous class hatred.[1] For the moment, however, the party of the constitution and order had triumphed. Danton, Marat, Desmoulins, Robespierre disappeared, and the Assembly publicly thanked the National Guard. But the moderates did not follow up their victory. The Jacobins almost immediately recovered their supremacy, and through the mother society the affiliated clubs were excited to further opposition to monarchy and the *bourgeoisie*. The mob of Paris might be forced into order, but the Jacobin minority of the departments was to sweep the Revolution far beyond the control of La Fayette and an indifferently civic and militant *bourgeoisie* of the capital.

Yet so optimistic was the country and so unwilling to forecast evil, that when, on September 14, 1791, after a fortnight's consideration, Louis accepted the Constitution and solemnly swore to uphold it, Frenchmen believed the foundations of constitutional liberty had been laid forever. "The Revolution," said Robespierre in an address, September 29, 1791, "is

[1] Bailly was guillotined in 1793 on the very spot where the firing had occurred.

finished";[1] and Rabaut St. Etienne, a member of the Constituent Assembly, published in 1792 his panegyric upon its work.

How far mistaken was this optimism appeared in the first expression of the new revolutionary spirit at the polls.

[1] The speech, which was repeatedly interrupted, is in full in *Archives Parlementaires*, XXXI, 620. In it Robespierre argues that for the very reason that the Revolution is finished the Jacobin Club is needed to explain and enforce the articles of the Constitution as well as to maintain the proper spirit of patriotism.

# CHAPTER XIV

## FOREIGN WAR AND THE END OF THE MONARCHY[1]

I. The Legislative Assembly: 1. The Elections; 2. The Girondins; 3. Marat, Danton, and Robespierre. II. The Growth of the Revolutionary Spirit. III. The War: 1. The Girondin Program; 2. The Grounds for War; 3. The Declaration of War. IV. Growing Opposition to the Monarchy: 1. The Two Vetoes; 2. June 20, 1792. V. August 10, 1792: 1. The Proclamation of the Duke of Brunswick; 2. The Preparations; 3. The Capture of the Tuileries; 4. The Suspension of the King.

With the first session of the National Legislative Assembly, October 1, 1791, France began to live under its new constitution. Could Louis have been induced to reign as a constitutional king, and to abandon all attempts at reinstating the Old Régime, something like quiet might have returned. But as it was, the entire nation was almost immediately convinced that the court was plotting against the new order of things and invoking foreign aid to help punish the patriots. This suspicion, apparently justified by so many acts of Louis, made even a constitutional monarchy with him as its representative no longer possible. It was not that France as a nation wished to be a republic; it was rather that it was determined to maintain the liberties gained by the Constituent Assembly, and that it was filled with abhorrence of the Old Régime

[1] In general, see Stephens, *French Revolution*, II, chs. 1-4; Carlyle, *French Revolution*, bks. v, vi; Thiers, *French Revolution*, I, 247-331; Taine, *French Revolution*, bk. iv, chs. 4-8. One should also read such novels as Erckmann-Chatrian, *The Country in Danger*, *Madame Therese*; Gras, *The Reds of the Midi*.

and terror lest the *émigrés* should be able to reinstate it. That this fear of Louis and the *émigrés* was not ungrounded appeared within a few months after the meeting of the new Assembly.

The legislative Assembly was a very different body from that which had drawn up the Constitution. Upon motion of Robespierre, the Constituent Assembly, by an act of foolish but well-intended self-denial, had decreed that none of its members should be elected to the succeeding house. Accordingly, the legislators who assembled in 1791 to carry on the affairs of the nation were almost as untried in statesmanship and in legislative proceedings as had been the members of the old States General. The elections had occurred under the circumstances already described, and, as is always the case, the more radical candidates had generally been elected. Besides, there can be little doubt that the French leaped with all facility into the secrets of intimidation and counting out. Refusal to take the civic oath, which included the clerical oath, threw out thousands. Many of those who sought to vote, but who were known to be opposed to or only half-hearted in favor of the Revolution, were beaten, stoned, stabbed. In Montpellier, for instance, the ballots were deposited and the ballot-boxes sealed. The Conservatives had a majority. Thereupon the Jacobin clubs burned one of the boxes, and in the process killed two men. A riot followed, in which four more men were killed, and the authorities terrified into disarming the well-to-do inhabitants. In the next three days six hundred families emigrated. The authorities then reported that the elections were proceeding in the quietest manner.

Accordingly, when we come to look at the complexion of the new Assembly, we find that it was decidedly inferior to the Constituent, although many of its members had had some experience in the new administrative offices. The old reactionary party was absolutely wanting, and the men whose opinions represented the Left of the first Assembly had become the Right of the second, the Feuillants or Constitutionalists. A neutral body, known as the Plain, or Swamp, occupied seats in the lower and central part of the hall. The radical opinions of the Extreme Left of the Constituent Assembly were represented by a large delegation known as the Mountain, from the high seats in which they sat. The most important party, however, in the Legislative Assembly was that of the Girondins, who, with the Mountain, composed the Left. They were all from the departments, and derived their name from the fact that their leaders, about whom they loosely gathered, came from the Department of the Gironde, in the southwestern portion of France. The Girondins have been immortalized in the great work of Lamartine as pure-minded patriots who finally became martyrs to their zeal for good politics. As a matter of fact, they were a body of hot-headed, inexperienced, eloquent young lawyers, full of admiration for Greeks and Romans, but with scarcely a statesmanlike idea among them. Wherever there was an opportunity for them to make a mistake, they enthusiastically accepted the opportunity.[1] But

[1]The political sagacity of the Girondins may be judged not only by their determination to establish a republic by a foreign war, and the astonishing Constitution of Condorcet, but by the proposal of Brissot, chairman of the Diplomatic Committee, that Dunkirk and Calais be ceded to England as pledges that France would abide by any treaty made with that country.

their leaders were so eloquent, and their confidence in themselves so cheering, that for a few months they were able to control the policy of the Assembly. Their program was simply the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic. Their high priestess was Madame Roland,[1] wife of a highly respectable, conscientious politician, double her age; a bright, ambitious woman, with a touch of genius, a taste for clubs, and a great fondness for attending to her husband's business.

Three men, however, clearly outranked all others as popular leaders—Marat, Danton, Robespierre. Of the three, Marat had been prominent from the summoning of the States General as a fanatical preacher of popular vengeance, but during the restoration of order by La Fayette and the National Guard he had seen his printing establishment broken up, and had been forced to hide himself, sometimes even in the sewers. With the coming of the new Assembly, however, he again took up open conflict with the hated aristocrats. Clear-eyed as to dangers, his one prescription was the death of those through whom dangers might arise.

Far different from Marat was Georges Jacques Danton,[2] who under the Old Régime had been a successful young lawyer in Paris. He had entered heartily into the elections for the States General, but soon grew dissatisfied with the work of the Constituent Assembly, and at first favored a change of dynasty.

[1] On Madame Roland, see Sainte Beuve, *Portraits of Celebrated Women*, 90; Lamartine, *Girondists* (Bohn ed.), 1, 272 293; Dauban, *Étude sur Madame Roland*; Yonge, *Life of Madame Roland*.

[2] On Danton, see Bougeart, *Danton*; Belloc, *Danton: A Study*; Beesly, *Life of Danton*; Gronlund, *Ca Ira*.

As the founder of the Cordelier Club he soon became known as an advanced revolutionist, and in 1791 was elected substitute to the *procureur* of the Commune of Paris, an official position which gave him great influence in the capital. Though not of exceptional ability, he was easily the most forceful man the Revolution produced between Mirabeau and Bonaparte. He has, indeed, often, and with justice, been compared with Mirabeau in point of eloquence, resourcefulness, and freedom from those political theories which perverted the minds of most of his contemporaries. Unlike Mirabeau, however, he was able to organize a following, and was ready to adopt extreme measures.

Totally unlike Marat or Danton was Maximilien Robespierre,[1] a young lawyer of thirty-three, from Arras. He was a precise, austere, intense, mediocre little man whose youth had been passed in poverty and study. He early became a disciple of Rousseau, and as far as his native town permitted, devoted himself to law and literature. There remain to this day a few of his poems and other writings, some upon birds, and one upon *Disgraceful Punishments*. He seems to have been successful in his law practice, and was at last appointed to a judgeship. This, however, he resigned after he had been obliged to pronounce a sentence of death. At the time of his election to the States General he had, therefore, some little repu-

[1] The great work upon Robespierre is *Histoire de Robespierre*, by his enthusiastic admirer, Hamel. In English see G. H. Lewes, *Life of Maximilien Robespierre*, and Morley, "Robespierre" in *Critical Miscellanies*, I; Stephens, "Robespierre," *Encyclopedia Britannica*; McCarthy, *French Revolution*, I, ch. 30. Taine, *French Revolution*, III, 143-168, is characteristically severe. Robespierre's poem, "The Rose," is in *Harper's Magazine*, April, 1889. Its translator Mrs. E. W. Latimer, has reprinted it and other biographical matter in her *Scrap Book of the French Revolution*.

tation as a lawyer and *litterateur*, but even less as a political theorist. From the time of his appearance in Paris, however, he gradually rose in importance, and as Mirabeau prophesied while others were laughing at him, he was "to go far, since he believed what he said." As a popular leader he had two remarkable characteristics: he was absolutely incorruptible and he refused to pander to the mob.

Thanks to their leaders, the advanced revolutionary spirit of the Jacobins affected both the Assembly and all "good citizens." Extreme opposition to anything that might look like sympathy with the "aristocracy" became a sort of fever. Throughout all these months of deepening political distress the court had maintained as best it could its old state. Balls and receptions, the king's *lever*, all the rigorous etiquette of the Old Régime had continued. But now etiquette weakened. Among the first deeds of the Legislative Assembly was to abolish "Sire" and "Your Majesty" as terms with which to address the king, and on January 1, 1792, Pétion, the new Girondin mayor of Paris, did not make the customary call at the royal palace. Even styles in clothing changed. Well-to-do classes of the Old Régime had worn short breeches with knee-buckles and silk stockings; the workingmen had worn long trousers. The fashions of the sovereign people had to be followed, and all men who were good revolutionists (except Robespierre) put away their short trousers, and wore the long pantaloons, long beards, and the red caps of the workingman. The expression *sans-culottes*, or without short breeches, became the watchword of all good revolutionists, and

*sans-culottism* an expressive word to indicate the wild extravagances into which the revolutionists rushed in their endeavor to show the equality of all men.

With the new Assembly, Rousseau's doctrine of popular sovereignty comes more than ever to the front. If the sessions of the Constituent Assembly had been disorderly, those of the Legislative were riotous. The sovereign people could not be excluded from the hall in which their servants debated, and the masses of Paris soon became the dictators of legislation. They crowded into the Assembly, howling their disapproval, stamping their approval of the measures passed by the delegates below. Brissot, for a long time a popular idol, when favoring a measure that happened not to please the sovereigns in the gallery, was pelted with plums. As another of the Girondins was trying to push his way up to the door of the Assembly, he met a market-woman, who stood in his way; he requested her to make room for him, whereupon she seized him by the hair, and bade him (and made him) bow his head to his sovereign!

With populace and popular leaders, Mountain and Girondins thus united in opposition to monarchy, despite the growing devotion of the *bourgeoisie* to constitutional provisions,[1] there was almost certainty of a republic, but the method of reaching this end was worthy of the new spirit and the new leaders. Constitutionally it was impossible to remove the king, except for some overt act, like treachery. His flight to Varennes might have served as the basis for such

[1] It should be remembered that there was in October, 1791, a decided reaction toward the king among the more wealthy class of Parisians. Morris says that the theaters were full of shouts for him and the royal family.

a charge, but in the era of good feeling succeeding Louis' acceptance of the Constitution all unfavorable decrees had been repealed, and the king had regained a momentary popularity. Removal by petition had been stopped by the "Massacre of the Champs de Mars." There was left, the Girondins thought, but one alternative, and that was war with the king's friends and suspected foreign allies. As a result of such a war, it was believed Louis would soon be detected in some traitorous act, and could then be legally suspended.

The plan was cumbrous and freighted with infinitely more misery than the most *enragé* deputy could have imagined a monarchy like that represented by Louis was capable of producing, but it was not altogether without reason. The interest of Europe in the Revolution, as we might easily imagine, was intense. A movement which had begun so peacefully and with so much éclat, and yet which had developed so rapidly into more than disguised opposition to royalty; a nation whose king, at first hailed as the savior of French liberty, had become practically its prisoner, and in which the wilder elements were gaining power, were not likely to be passed unnoticed by an age trained to expect revolutions.[1] As early as August, 1791, the king of Prussia and the emperor of Austria had concluded a treaty at Pilnitz, and issued a declaration to the effect that the cause of Louis XVI. was conditionally made the cause of all the monarchs of Europe. This declaration really amounted to but

[1] Reference can again be well made to Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution.*

little, and was hardly more than bluster, yet at the same time it was never forgotten by the French, and increased both their suspicion of the king and their dread of foreign intervention in behalf of the Old Régime. Nevertheless, after Louis had accepted the constitution, the attitude of the European powers grew pacific. The king had apparently adjusted matters with the nation, and foreign intervention seemed no longer needed. But the fatal—and, as we know now, well-justified—suspicion of the royal family persisted.

Another source of danger to France were the emigrant nobles, who had formed two great military camps: the one at Coblentz, composed of intriguing, inefficient courtiers under the Count d'Artois, and the other at Worms, under the Duke of Condé, composed of earnest and determined enemies of the New Régime, especially as it concerned the church. The latter body of men constituted a real danger to France, but the Girondins found it more to their purpose to deal with the former. The Girondin war policy was not favored by the Jacobins. Robespierre opposed it in three strong speeches, on the ground that, so far from giving a democracy, it would strengthen the power of the king and the *bourgeoisie*—precisely the reason for which Narbonne, a constitutionalist rather than Girondin at heart, favored the policy. Marat, with the foresight that characterized him on most questions where his peculiar hatreds were not concerned, argued pertinently in his paper: "Who is it that suffers in a war? Not the rich, but the poor, not the high-born officer, but the poor peasant." Danton completely vanquished Brissot, the war leader

of the Girondins, in a debate at the Jacobin Club. With a bankrupt treasury, a disordered state, an ill-disciplined army, untrustworthy officers, and an untried constitution, there was everything to lose and little, except what was already inevitable, to gain. But the Girondins and Madame Roland would not so see the future, and the subsequent Reign of Terror, which sprang directly from the panic and anarchy caused by foreign invasion, is to be laid at the doors of the hot-headed young men who precipitated a foreign war as a measure of domestic politics.[1]

The grounds for war were not difficult to discover. It is true France had unexpired treaties with Austria and Prussia, but they might very fairly be said to have been strained by the aid given the *émigrés*, as well as by the declaration of Pilnitz. It also appears that the Girondins attempted to disregard such formalities. Brissot declared that "the sovereignty of the people was not to be bound by the treaties of tyrants." Fauchet, another of the war party, proposed that the Legislative Assembly should make alliances with nations like England and America, that were free, and with other nations as soon as they conquered their freedom, and that in the mean time these other nations should be treated like "good-natured savages."[2] But such methods did not please the Assembly, and the Girondins returned to the *émigrés*. In this they

[1] This policy of a foreign war is by no means peculiar to the Girondins. Napoleon III. recurred to it three times, and Seward proposed it to Lincoln in 1861 as the means of preventing the Civil War in America. But in each of these cases it was intended to allay, not intensify, political troubles.

[2] The political vocabulary of the eighteenth century, with its "tyrants," "slaves," "liberty," "freemen," is to be seen in most modern political songs, including those of America. Compare, for instance, "Hail Columbia" and "The Star Spangled Banner" with the "Marseillaise."

were unexpectedly aided by the king himself, for Louis had dismissed his incompetent minister of war, and in his place had appointed Narbonne, at heart a constitutionalist, but, as has been said, who sided with the Girondins for a reason precisely opposite to theirs. The electors of Trèves and Mayence were protecting the *émigrés*, and December 13th the Assembly declared to them, through the king, that unless all armaments were dispersed, they would be treated as enemies. January 16th, Louis informed the Assembly that the *émigrés* had been expelled from the electorates. It was, however, but a shadowy expulsion, and as a matter of fact, the camps remained. On January 25th, the Assembly requested the king to inform the emperor that if by March 1st he did not declare his intention to do nothing against France, his silence would be regarded as a declaration of war. Leopold replied in a letter inspired by Marie Antoinette, in which he attacked the Jacobins. These negotiations were momentarily interrupted by the death of Leopold, but his successor, the young Francis II., neglected the demand of the Assembly for an explanation of the declaration of Pilnitz, and undertook to champion the cause of his aunt, Marie Antoinette. Through his minister he therefore wrote France demanding the reëstablishment of the Old Régime on the basis fixed by the royal session of June 23, 1789. He further demanded damages for those of his nobles who had suffered because of the abrogation of feudal dues on the estates they held in Alsace. At the same time Austrian troops marched toward the French frontier. His

letter was welcomed in the Assembly with a burst of laughter, and after receiving it there was only one road to follow. On April 20, 1792, Louis appeared in the Assembly, and in a low voice proposed that war be declared upon Austria. On the same day, with a minority of only seven votes, war was declared—a war not for conquest, men said, but for the defense and the spread of liberty. And thus light-heartedly France entered upon those twenty-three years of struggle that were to give to her a republic, a Reign of Terror, an empire, and a Bourbon restoration; to Europe territorial readjustment, constitutions, and public debts; but to both the imperishable blessing of political equality, and in the end, so we trust, political liberty.[1]

While thus the Girondins were leading the nation into war, Louis again had an opportunity to place himself at the head of a nation for the moment united by a common danger. In a measure he did this by appointing a Girondin ministry, in which were Dumouriez and Roland; but both he and Marie Antoinette were fighting for time. They contemptuously rejected the aid of La Fayette and Barnave, and as we now know from their correspondence, while they were apparently leading France into war with Austria and the *émigrés*, they were at the same time appealing to both for help. The Assembly knew nothing of this fact, though the air was full of attacks upon the king and "the Austrian woman"; but reasons for suspecting the king's sincerity were also given by his use of his constitutional power of veto.

[1] The formal declaration of war and Condorcet's Statement of Motives are given in Thiers, *French Revolution*, I, 238–240.

Two bills had been passed by the Assembly. The first, though perhaps necessary, exhibited the growing hatred of the church, and proposed that the priests who had refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Assembly must either take it within a week or leave their canton in twenty-four hours, the department in thirty-six, and the kingdom in one month. The king vetoed it. The other bill concerned the establishment of a camp of twenty thousand men outside of Paris, as a reserve for the protection of the capital itself. The king vetoed this bill also.

In ordinary times the king's action in both of these cases would have admitted of considerable justification. The bill against the priests was certainly severe,[1] and the establishment of such a camp might well arouse fears lest the extreme revolutionists would use soldiers to destroy the state. But the time in which the vetoes were made was unfortunate. Not only were the clergy fomenting rebellion, but war had begun disastrously on the frontiers. The army had been divided into three great divisions, and each had moved against the enemy. Belgium was, it is true, for a few days invaded, but generally the first attempts of the raw French troops against the combined powers were singularly unsuccessful; the soldiers had fled almost before the enemy had fired, and one division, with wild shouts of "Treason!" had murdered its commander. Suspicion is endemic in

[1] Robespierre opposed the bill. In this as in other matters he showed himself no mere demagogue. He had taken no interest in a hysterical celebration in favor of certain Swiss soldiers who had been released from the galleys, whither they had been sent for refusing to fire upon a mob; and he had refused to let some Jacobin put the "red cap" of liberty upon his head, and had even trampled it under his feet.

France. It was epidemic in 1792. It was openly charged that the king was in correspondence with foreign courts; La Fayette began to be the object of others' than Marat's hatred; his division retreated, Marshal Rochambeau resigned; no man knew whom he could trust. These vetoes of the king seemed to indicate that he was expecting aid from without and was setting himself in opposition to the will of the people. And this suspicion was increased by the subsequent ill-advised, if intelligible, action of Louis in dismissing Roland[1] and two other Girondin ministers, who had been forced upon him by the Assembly. Dumouriez, an exceedingly able soldier, accepted the position of minister of war, but with condition that the king should sign the two bills. The king promised to sign them. Three days later Dumouriez had taken office, and presented the bills; but the king refused to keep his word, and Dumouriez, righteously indignant, resigned. The situation of France thus was critical. Its arms had been defeated; its enemies were exultant; its internal affairs were in disorder; its king was evidently expecting aid from the armies on the frontiers; its queen was universally believed to be a traitor.[2]

Under these circumstances, some form of emphatic protest seemed indispensable. On June 20th a demonstration was made which was evidently intended to terrify the king into signing the bill against the priests

[1] Madame Roland had written for her husband a letter to the king in which she had outlined the royal policy frankly, if not imperiously.

[2] That these suspicions were not gratuitous appears from the fact that in March, 1792, Marie Antoinette forwarded to the Austrian court the proposed plan of campaign. It was a piece of supreme treachery, and under any law would be liable to the death sentence.

and that in favor of the camp of reserves. It was planned and managed by subordinate popular leaders, though opposed by Robespierre and Danton. It was peaceful, and on the whole, were it not for what it portended, half-ludicrous. The original plan of Santerre and Pétion, the mayor of Paris, seems to have been for a huge delegation to carry a petition to the Assembly, then to plant a liberty tree in honor of the Oath of the Tennis Court, and then go home. Events proceeded at first without great disorder. The crowd from the poorest wards marched through the Assembly hall, under the inspiring banners of a pair of short breeches on a pole, and a calf's heart, labeled "The heart of an aristocrat," on a pike. Then in some way not understood it was allowed to enter the Palace of the Tuileries. It marched through the royal apartments howling "Down with Monsieur Veto! Monsieur Veto to the devil!" The king stood in a window recess, and put the "red cap" on his head; the queen barricaded herself and the dauphin behind a table and fat Santerre, the dauphin also wearing a red liberty cap. The crowd was rude, but it was good-natured, offering Louis a drink from a black bottle, huzzaing for the dauphin, and finally for the king. It was simply a threat. But what it might have become but for the stolid courage of Louis and the dignity of the queen it is not hard to guess. One gets a new respect for the personal bearing of both Louis and Marie Antoinette from this day on; neither of them was lacking a whit in courage. When Louis was asked by a grenadier if he was afraid, he replied: "Afraid! Certainly not; put your hand on my heart and feel

it beat." The queen, addressed by one of the women who hung on the outskirts of the crowd, answered so kindly and so majestically that the woman burst into tears. Indeed the whole affair produced a short-lived reaction in favor of the king. The queen's treachery was of course unknown, and Louis, though himself in correspondence with the enemy, was loud in his protestations of his devotion to the Constitution. Pétion, the mayor of the city of Paris, who had certainly been concerned in the affair and had not taken any steps to preserve order, was suspended from office, and La Fayette came hurrying on from the frontier to demand justice against the participants. It almost seems as if he might have headed a *bourgeois* army against the Jacobins. There was good prospect of success, but both Louis and the queen refused to be saved by him or any other liberal, and he returned to his army after having been attacked by the Girondins for having left it without leave.

It was impossible that any royalist reaction could be more than a sort of eddy in the great flood of the revolutionary stream. The Girondins through Vergniaud attacked Louis both as ungenerous and as a cause of the war. The leaders of the people, and the people themselves, were so thoroughly imbued with the teachings of Rousseau that nothing could satisfy them except the end of the monarchy. A young deputy expressed this feeling well on June 20th. After the crowd had left the palace the unhappy king and queen fell into each other's arms. All present were deeply moved—this young deputy to tears. But he explained this weakness: "I weep, madame," he said

to the queen, "for the misfortunes of a beautiful and sensitive woman, and for the sufferings of a mother; I do not weep for the queen. I hate queens and kings; to hate them is my religion." It was indeed about all the religion many Frenchmen had.[1]

On July 11th the Assembly declared that "the country was in danger," and called for eighty-five thousand volunteers. The action was not without cause. In the coalition against France were Prussia, since the days of Frederick the Great recognized as the greatest military force in Europe, and Austria, nearly the equal of Prussia. There is little wonder, therefore, that France, be it never so enthusiastic for liberty, should have regarded with apprenhesion this union of its old enemies. Reverses, with suspicion of widespread treason, it will be remembered, had marked the first efforts of the revolutionary armies. The suspicion of treachery on the part of the government had increased, and with it the fear of coming retribution.

To France, thus pendulating between a delirious dream of popular sovereignty and the fear of punishment at the hands of an invading army, came suddenly the declaration of the Duke of Brunswick, the commander of the allied forces. Had Austria and Prussia deliberately planned to aid the Girondins and Jacobins in destroying the French monarchy, they could have chosen nothing more suited to that end than this declaration which, at the suggestion of Marie Antoinette, the Duke of Brunswick published in the summer of 1792. In this manifesto Brunswick declared that

[1] In addition to the general references given above, on June 20, 1792, see Mortimer-Ternaux, *Histoire de la Terreur*, I, 129-223.

the allies were entering France to deliver Louis from captivity; that all members of the National Guard found fighting against the invaders would be banished as rebels; and further declared that "if the Tuileries were forced or insulted, or the least violence offered to the king and the queen or the royal family, and if provision were not made at once for their safety and liberty, the allied powers would inflict a memorable vengeance by delivering up the city of Paris to military execution and total annihilation." With this proclamation spread broadcast before him, Brunswick moved upon France. It was a challenge as well as a threat to both *bourgeoisie* and Jacobins, and all France accepted the challenge and answered the threat. And the answer was the destruction of the monarchy.

It is impossible to tell just when the plan was formed that led to the events of the 10th of August, but it could not have been long after June 20th. The hope of bringing about the abdication of Louis and the peaceful or parliamentary end of the monarchy was abandoned. In such a supreme affair, however, the popular leaders appear to have been unwilling to trust the rabble of Paris. They had accordingly turned to the departments, and the Girondin Barbaroux, one of Madame Roland's coterie, summoned a band of men from Marseilles. These men of Marseilles are commonly spoken of as a band of ruffians. Recent historians, however, have shown that the band was composed of picked men from the National Guards of Marseilles who "knew how to die." On the 2d of July they left Marseilles five hundred

and thirteen strong, with two cannon. Their coming was expected, and even the Girondins shrank from the violence expected from their arrival. Vergniaud wrote a letter to Louis urging rational action. Madame de Staël endeavored to persuade the royal family to escape through her aid. Her offer was coldly declined. The hopes of king and queen were now built on foreign invasion. On July 30th the Marseillais came into Paris, singing the hymn that has been the pæan of revolutions, the Marseillaise, while all France, taught the song by their march across the country, joined in the chorus, "Rather death than slavery." Their arrival was felt to be the beginning of the culmination of a great plot against the king. The Assembly, even before their arrival, had authorized a committee to draw up a list of acts that might lead to dethronement. The Jacobin Club had been indefatigable in organizing the different sections of Paris. Santerre had promised to lead out again the wild men of Faubourg San Antoine. The National Guard was carefully sifted, and those who could not be trusted to join an uprising were replaced by members of the mob. A secret organization, of which Santerre, Danton, and Camille Desmoulins were leaders, took charge of all the movements. An uprising was planned for July 26th, and then for July 30th, but both miscarried. All these facts were known to every man in Paris, and the king's friends made every effort to persuade him to escape, but the queen would have nothing to do with them because they had favored the Constitution. The king knew that on August 9th the tocsin would be rung, and that on the next day his palace would be

attacked. He therefore summoned his ministers and Pétion, the mayor of Paris, and endeavored to gain from them protection. Pétion declared, with a smile, that there was no need of alarm, that the rising would all end in smoke, and went home. Mandat, leader of the troops of the palace, was the only man who seems to have taken any measures to protect the king. His chief reliance was on the Swiss guards, who, on the 8th of August, to the number of eight hundred, had been ordered to come to the Tuileries. In addition, there were perhaps two hundred personal friends of the king in the palace, as well as several battalions of the National Guard — altogether perhaps two thousand men, though, as it proved, not more than one thousand could be counted upon to defend the king. Mandat had requested the Assembly to issue ball cartridges for his troops, but his order was refused. He thereupon made the best use he could of the resources at hand, and stationed his troops at strategic points about and in the Tuileries. Thus the two sides, on the 9th of August, were ready for the struggle.

The plan of the secret committee seems to have been first to involve the defenders of the king, and so the king, in a struggle with the mob, which should give countenance to a charge that the king was false to his country, and then, after he had been taken prisoner by the storming of the palace, to take the second step of deposition by the Assembly itself. Westerman was to have charge of the military operations, Danton of the legislative. Only one thing seems to have excited the anxieties of the leaders of the uprising— the precautions taken by Mandat and his evident inten-

tion to offer serious resistance. They therefore resolved to remove such an efficient officer. Mandat was summoned to the city hall; there, after being questioned closely as to his plans, he was dismissed; but as he was returning to the palace he was seized, taken before the secret organization having in charge the uprising, and on his refusal to sign an order for the Swiss to return to their barracks, he was suspended from his command, and Santerre appointed as his temporary successor. As he was going down the steps of the city hall, a crowd of ruffians closed upon him and killed him. Whether or not this murder was a part of the original plan it is hard to decide. It certainly benefited the leaders of the insurrection, for the force stationed for the defense of the king was left without a recognized commander.

Early in the morning the crowd began to gather about the Tuileries. Although it was not the insurrectionary army, the king was evidently in danger. The ministers begged him to go to the Assembly for protection. Between eight and nine in the morning Louis yielded an uncertain assent, and accompanied by his wife, the royal family, the ministers, and a few soldiers, walked from the Tuileries to the Assembly hall, where he was received decently by the deputies and conducted to a room or reporter's box, twelve feet square, just behind the president's seat. There he and his companions remained for more than thirty hours. Up to the time of the departure of the king there seems to have been little or no bloodshed, and it is possible that the events of the 10th of August might have passed off as peacefully as those of the

20th of June. The crowd began to disperse, when through some mistake they were allowed to pass through the court of the palace. The Marseillais rushed up the stairway of the palace, where the Swiss were drawn in line. For a moment it seemed as if the Swiss would yield to the appeals of Westerman, who spoke German, and fraternize with the Revolutionists, but their officers brought them back to their duty. Almost at that moment a shot was fired; it was immediately followed by a volley from the Swiss stationed in the windows of the palace, and by a charge of the Swiss down the staircase that sent the mob flying, cleared the court, and captured the guns of the Marseillais. The firing then became general, and the Swiss, though having no commander, being well officered and protected by the walls of the palace, were doing well. Napoleon Bonaparte, then an unknown officer in the artillery, was watching the mêlée from the other side of the Seine, and was of the opinion that had the Swiss been properly led they would have completely routed their assailants. Three years later he demonstrated the truth of his judgment by putting a mob to flight almost on the same ground. But just at this critical juncture the king, hearing the musketry, wrote an order for the Swiss to stop firing and dispatched it by a messenger. This messenger neglected to deliver the order for nearly three-quarters of an hour, and in the mean time a hundred of the insurgents had been killed or wounded. On the reception of the king's order a portion of the Swiss immediately stopped firing, fell into line, and began to retreat from the Tuileries to the Assembly. There they were dis-

armed and placed for safety in a neighboring church. But there were other Swiss soldiers in the halls and corridors of the palace, who had not heard the order of the king to stop firing, and kept up the fighting. When they found themselves deserted by their companions, they began to retreat, only to find themselves hemmed in by their enemies, who shot them down. At last the wretched men formed a square about the statue of Louis XV., and there perished almost to a man. These Swiss were mercenaries, like the Hessians in the American Revolution, but they were faithful to their service, and no one of the hundreds of travelers who look up at the noble lion of Thorwaldsen at Lucerne but shares with Switzerland the admiration that erected the memorial.

While thus the Swiss were being shot down, an indiscriminate slaughter was begun in the palace, not probably by the organized insurrectionists, but by that bloodthirsty rabble that always hangs about a riot. The very cooks and servants were murdered, and for hours the palace was sacked and the royal stables burned.[1]

From this time began the short but terrible reign of the Revolutionary Commune of Paris. Even while the Swiss were being massacred this Commune appeared in the Assembly and ordered the few members of that terrified body who were present to dethrone the king. In answer to their demand, the Assembly, in his very presence, suspended Louis,[2] and

[1] Ready wit sometimes saved one's life, as in the case of the royal physician, who faced his would-be murderers, told them he was not afraid of them, and so escaped. The ladies of the court were also saved by some one's shouting, "Spare the women, let us not dishonor the nation."

[2] According to Madame Campan, Louis ate so imperturbably and heartily while at the Assembly, that the queen felt obliged to apologize for him!

three days later, in accordance with the constitutional provision, summoned a Convention to draw up a new constitution, Vergniaud, chief orator of the Gironde, making the motion. French monarchy had followed French feudalism.[1]

So far had the Revolution under the guidance of its new leaders proceeded. In comparison with Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and the leaders of the insurrectionary Commune of Paris, the leaders of the Constituent Assembly were reactionists. They had attempted simply the abolition of privilege; the Legislative Assembly, under the guidance of the Girondins, had sought through war the end of monarchy. At last the wishes of the Girondins were realized—a republic was to be established. But far enough was this republic from that of which they had dreamed, and farther still from their planning was to be its future.[2]

[1] Though neither permanently, for there was to be a Restoration, nor formally. No revolutionary movement was more regardful of the letter of a constitution. The king was not dethroned, but suspended. An actual change in the Constitution, such as the establishment of a republic would have been, to be legal needed the work of a Convention. The vote of the Convention, September 21, 1792, declaring France a republic, was strictly constitutional, and marks the formal end of the reign of Louis XVI.

[2] On August 10, 1792, see, in addition to general references given above, Mortimer-Ternaux, *Histoire de la Terreur*, II, 213-269; Wallon, *La Terreur*, I, 15-31; Von Sybel, *French Revolution*, I, 498-531; Carlyle, *French Revolution*, II, bk. vi. The material is given in great detail in Buchez et Roux, *Hist. Parl.* The best contemporary account of the fight at the Tuileries is that of Baron de Durler, one of the officers in command of the Swiss. It is published by Stephens, *English Historical Review*, II, 350 (April, 1887). The statement of the text that Louis *wrote* the order to stop firing is not confirmed by Durler, but he speaks of a written order signed by Louis for the Swiss (apparently those who had retired to the Assembly) to lay down their arms. Durler himself escaped to England through the aid of a German deputy in the Assembly.

Perhaps as good an expression as any of the spirit of the Parisian masses on the 10th of August, 1792, is to be found in the *Carmagnole*, a revolutionary song and dance, some of the numerous verses of which are here given:

CARMAGNOLE.

Madame Veto avait promis,
Madame Veto avait promis,
De faire égorger tout Paris,
De faire égorger tout Paris.

Mais le coup a manqué,
Grâce à nos canonniers!
Dansons la Carmagnole
Vive le son, vive le son!
Dansons la Carmagnole
Vive le son du canon!

Monsieur Veto avait promis (*bis*)
D'être fidèle à sa patrie (*bis*);
Mais il y a manqué.
Ne faisons plus quartié.
Dansons la Carmagnole, etc.

Antoinette avait résolu (*bis*)
De nous fair' tomber sur le cu (*bis*);
Mais son coup a manqué;
Elle a le nez cassé.
Dansons la Carmagnole, etc.

Les Suisses avaient promis (*bis*)
Qu'ils feraient feu sur nos amis (*bis*)
Mais, comme ils ont sauté,
Comme ils ont tous dansé!
Dansons la Carmagnole, etc.

Le patriote a pour amis (*bis*)
Tous les bonnes gens du pays (*bis*)
Mais ils se soutiendront
Tous au son du canon.
Dansons la Carmagnole, etc.

L'aristocrate a pour amis (*bis*)
Tous les royalist's à Paris (*bis*)
Ils vous les soutiendront
Tout comm' de vrais poltrons
Dansons la Carmagnole, etc.

# PART IV

## THE REPUBLIC

## CHAPTER XV

### THE JACOBIN CONQUEST

I. The Crisis of August and September, 1792. II. The September Massacres: 1. In Paris; 2. In the Departments. III. The Success of French Arms. IV. The Convention: 1. Declaration of the Republic; 2. The Girondins and the Mountain. V. Struggle between the Girondins and the Mountain: 1. The Attack of the Girondins; 2. The Counter-Attack of the Mountain; 3. The Execution of Louis XVI. VI. Final Struggle between the Two Parties: 1. The New Crisis; 2. The *Coup d'Etat* of June 2, 1793.

The suspension of the king and the call for the Convention naturally paralyzed all existing government. To meet the need of some executive head, the Assembly, on August 10th, created a Provisional Executive Council, composed of ministers whom it proceeded to elect. In this new Council, the forerunner of the great Committee of Public Safety, Roland was given the portfolio of the Interior, Servan of War, and Danton of Justice.[2] But the real ruler of France between the suspension of Louis and the declaration of the republic was the insurrectionary Commune, or town

[1] In general, see Von Sybel, *French Revolution*, II, 47–111, 260–296, III, 54–83; Stephens, *French Revolution*, II, chs. 5–8; Taine, *French Revolution*, bk. iv, chs. 11, 12; Carlyle, *French Revolution*, III, bks. i–iii.

[2] Aulard, *Recueil des Actes du Comité de Salut public*, I, 1–4.

council of Paris. It was composed of men chosen without legal warrant from twenty-eight *sections* or wards of Paris, who had forced the original Commune to resign, and now ruled as the representatives of the lower classes and of the Jacobin minority. Its members were elected from the most radical and desperate of the popular leaders, and included Marat, Collot d'Herbois, and Billaud-Varennes. Their organization may be regarded as the result of the attempt of the masses of Paris to take the control of the Revolution away from the Girondins, the representatives of the departments.[1]

The new governors found the situation of France desperate. August 18th, La Fayette, who had attempted and failed to win over his army to the cause of the imprisoned king, fled over the border to the Austrians, by whom he was imprisoned for five years. The peasants of the Vendée, already goaded into madness by the laws against their beloved non-juring priests,[2] revolted, with the war-cry, "Long live the king! Death to the Parisians!" The Sardinians crossed the southeastern frontier. The advancing Prussian army took Longwy; then Verdun fell, its commandant in despair blowing out his brains; and by the end of August the Duke of Brunswick was only three days' march from the capital. But Brunswick was only one of the enemies the popular leaders feared. The armies in the field, under the influence of the commissioners sent them by the

[1] The complete reorganization of the military force of Paris in the interests of the workingmen rather than the property-holding classes was a part of the same program as the organization of the Commune.

[2] That is, those priests who refused to take the oath to support the new Constitution with its ecclesiastical provisions.

Assembly, might still confront him. The Jacobins knew very well that Paris was full of men and women who sympathized with Louis, and who hoped for the speedy arrival of the Prussian army. The Assembly endeavored to provide against this danger. On the 17th of August, upon motion by Robespierre, the Assembly established a tribunal to try the conspirators of the 10th of August, meaning thereby the Swiss and the royalists who had fired upon the insurrectionary army. On the 27th it called upon Paris for an army of thirty thousand men to protect the capital. On the 28th, upon motion of Danton, a general search for arms and suspects through the city was ordered to be conducted by the Commune. That body chose Marat chairman of the committee to which the matter was referred, and the next few days he was the most important man in Paris. On the 30th the gates of the city were closed, and no man was allowed to go out or come in; the streets were illuminated, and bodies of the National Guards entered every house and searched it from top to bottom. "Patrols of sixty pikemen were in every street. The nocturnal tumult of so many armed men, the incessant knocks to make people open their doors, the crash of those that were burst off their hinges, and the continual uproar and reveling which took place throughout the night in all the public-houses, formed a picture which will never be effaced from my memory." So wrote Peltier, of his own knowledge. Few arms were found, but three thousand persons suspected of sympathizing with the invaders and the king were arrested and shut up in the prisons, and as they were not large enough to contain them

all, in convents. The Assembly, to its credit be it said, attempted to restrain the actions of this over-zealous insurrectionary Commune, and even ordered it to dissolve. Robespierre, always the enemy of anything approaching anarchy, advised the Commune to obey. But in the face of both vote and advice, on the 2d of September the Commune resolved that instead of dissolving it would increase its numbers to 298, and carry out its hideous policy. On the same day, while Danton was in the Assembly, the tocsin began ringing. Danton sprang to his feet. "That tocsin sounds," he shouted, "the charge upon the enemies of France. Conquer them! Courage! courage! forever courage! and France is saved!" The Assembly rang with applause, and decreed that every one who was unable to march to the frontier himself should give up his weapons to some one who could, or be forever infamous. But whether or not Danton knew it,[1] the tocsin sounded for two purposes, both to summon volunteers to the Champs de Mars and to summon murderers to the prisons. "Can we go away to the war and leave three thousand prisoners behind us in Paris who may break out and destroy our wives and children?" demanded the brutal, panic-stricken enthusiasts for liberty. And under the inspiration of Marat the Commune undertook to see that this danger was removed.

It is noteworthy that the first act of the approaching tragedy expressed the popular hatred of the church. Several carriage-loads of priests who would not take the civic oath were being carried from the Hôtel de

[1] For an able defense of Danton in this matter, see Beesley, *Life of Danton*, ch. 12; the articles by Robinet in *Rev. de Rev. française*, Nov., 1882, to July, 1883; and by Dubort, *ibid*, Aug.-Dec., 1886. See also Bougeart, *Danton*, and Gronlund, *Ca Ira*, *passim*.

Ville to the Abbaye, a convent that was for the time used as a prison. Hardly had they arrived when they were dragged from the carriages and slaughtered. One only escaped, the Abbé Sicard, noted for his work among the deaf and dumb. The deed was a signal for similar massacres, but in the other prisons there was more evidence of premeditation.

Any visitor to Paris may walk from the quiet gallery of the Luxembourg along the Rue de Vaurigard to the Church of the Carmellites. The guide will lead him to the rear of the church, and there show him two rooms and a narrow entry—rude, peaceful, the last place in which to look for reminders of massacre. Yet on the second day of September, 1792, one of the rooms was filled with priests; in the other sat an irregular tribunal, before which one after another of these priests was brought, passed a moment of examination, and then—most of them—passed out through the entry into the arms of butchers, hired at six francs a day. There are few more terrible days in history than the first four days of September, 1792, when France was without a constitutional government. In Paris alone 1,100 persons of all ranks were butchered, among them 250 priests, three bishops or archbishops, one former minister of Louis,[1] and the Princess Lamballe, the intimate friend of Marie Antoinette, whose loyalty had brought her from safety in England to death and nameless mutilation.[2]

[1] Montmorin, the friend of Mirabeau. These figures of Stephens, II, 146, are given differently by various authorities. Mortimer-Ternaux, *La Terreur*, gives the total as 1,368.

[2] The murderers among other things dragged her headless body through the streets, and stuck her head upon a pike. Then they tried to hold it up before the window of the queen's room, but Marie Antoinette was fortunately unaware of the fact.

These massacres, though traceable immediately to the Commune of Paris, none the less were the outcome of the revolutionary spirit of no small faction of Frenchmen. The passion for "rights" among the educated classes might result in legislation, but among the ignorant and brutal was sure to lead to suspicion and violence. "The people of Paris," said the Girondin Louvet a few days later, in his attack upon Robespierre in the Assembly, "can fight; they cannot murder." But Louvet should have known better. The people of Paris could do both. "Do you think I deserve only twenty-five francs?" shouted a baker's boy. "Why, I have killed forty with my own hands." And the Commune paid 173 such butchers, as we know from an official list. In itself this shows that the massacres were not the product of mere mob-frenzy, and how deliberate the proceedings were is to be seen from other facts. Wine and food were sent to the men at work in the prisons. Benches, under charge of ushers, were marked *Pour les Messieurs* and *Pour les Dames*, and upon them through days and nights the "gentlemen" and "ladies" sat to enjoy the spectacle! All France was summoned by circulars of the Commune to join in purging the nation of its enemies and in terrifying the aristocrats.[1] "Apprized," ran this circular, "that barbarous hordes are advancing against it, the Commune of Paris hastens to inform its brothers in all the departments that part of the ferocious conspirators confined in the prisons have been put to death by the people, acts of justice

[1] The Assembly's submission to the Commune was complete. The actions of the latter body were simply usurpations of sovereignty, and with its rise to power, liberty ceased in France.

which appear to it indispensable for repressing by terror the legions of traitors encompassed by its walls, at the moment when they were about to march against the enemy; and no doubt the nation, after the long series of treasons which have brought it to the brink of the abyss, will eagerly adopt this useful and necessary expedient; and all the French will say, like the Parisians, 'We are marching against the enemy, and we will not leave behind us traitors to murder our wives and our children.' "

And France heeded the call. Atrocities were committed throughout its entire extent—atrocities that are without excuse, though unhappily not without parallel.[1]

Yet it must be admitted that the massacres of September did what they were intended to do—they stopped counter-revolution in Paris, and terrified the *bourgeoisie* into submission to the Jacobin programme. The shame of it is that this could be true, and that there was no government strong enough to bring the Commune and its agents to punishment.

While Paris was thus inhumanly delivered from its absurd fears of unarmed prisoners, the victorious

[1] Murders of one to eight persons of quality occurred in Meaux, Rheims, Couches, Lyons, Charleville, Caen, Gisors, Bordeaux, Cambray, while at Versailles one Fournier, called the American, massacred forty-four prisoners who had been charged with high treason and were being conducted by him to Paris. The Commune congratulated him on the deed. There was mob violence in many other towns. The abysmal brutality of it all was inevitable among masses so debased as the proletariat of all cities in France. Yet one constantly meets with instances of kind-heartedness. Probably the best term with which to describe the entire homicidal epidemic is "political persecution." The church allied with absolutism had taught men the lesson of bloodshed all too well in France and neighboring countries. Recall only the Albigenses, St. Bartholomew's Night, and the Low Countries. On the September massacres, see Carlyle, III, bk. i; Mortimer-Ternaux, *Hist. de la Terreur*, III, i; Buchez et Roux, *Hist. Parl.*, XVII, 331–475, XVIII, 70–477 (including the accounts of several eye-witnesses, some of whom barely escaped death); Wallon, *La Terreur*, I, 31–45, Taine, *French Revolution*, bk. iv, chs. 9, 10, contains a large amount of information concerning the violence in the departments.

advance of the Prussians was stopped by the insignificant "cannonade of Valmy"—or was it by Danton's bribing the mistress of the king of Prussia?—and all danger was past. The massacres were forgotten in fêtes and theaters and receptions. The royal family, comfortably imprisoned in the Temple, could no longer intrigue, and Paris regained its gaiety.

Republican France began its epoch with a new propagandism in behalf of liberty. All administrative, municipal, and judicial bodies were ordered to be remade, lest they should be "gangrened with royalism." "Citizen" and "citizeness" (*citoyen* and *citoyenne*) replaced "monsieur" and "madame" as terms of address. Savoy and Nice had been conquered in September, and by the end of October no enemy remained within France. Dumouriez invaded the Low Countries, and November 6th his barefooted, ill-armed troops, shouting the Marseillaise, defeated the Austrians at Jemmapes, and by the middle of December the French were masters of the Netherlands, the Meuse, and the Scheldt. Custine captured Mayence, and threatened all western Germany. By the decree of November 19th, the Convention declared that the cause of nations was arrayed against that of kings, and promised aid to any nation which would rise against its tyrant.[1]

But during these military successes France was passing through a new period of internal struggle.

Under the influence of the September massacres elections had been going on for that body which, according to the Constitution of 1791, could alone

[1] This absurd decree was later repealed through the efforts of Danton.

produce a new constitution. In the Convention, which assembled on September 21, 1792, parties were more than ever marked, and again show more clearly than any other symptom the progress of the Revolution. The Right was now the loosely joined, mutually jealous Girondin party, which had formed a part of the Left in the Legislative Assembly; the Center, or Marsh, was again neutral; the Mountain was now strongly represented. In it were to be found the leaders of the Jacobins, and indeed most of the extreme popular leaders including Robespierre, Danton, and Marat. Taken as a whole, the members of the Convention had been also members of the Constituent or Legislative Assembly, and were therefore not without experience. Many of them, especially in the Marsh, were men of high character. Yet again there was an absence of definite purpose on the part of the great mass of delegates, and again the history of France was to be written by well-organized, aggressive minorities—notably by the Mountain, among whose leaders professional education and philosophical sympathies had not destroyed political energy.

In the first session of the Convention (September 21, 1792) all parties united in abolishing monarchy and in declaring France a republic, and in due time a committee was appointed to draw up a new constitution. But constitution-making was of far less importance than the question as to whether the Girondins or the Mountain should control the Revolution in its new constructive phase. Both parties were thoroughly devoted to the Republic, but differed in many details. The Girondins were opposed to the suprem-

acy of Paris in the state, and favored a decentralized government, in which the departments should be allowed a large share of independence. The Mountain, composed largely of Parisians, believed in a strong, centralized state, in which, if necessary, there should be, as Marat said, a dictator in behalf of liberty.[1] Yet this divergence of opinion need not necessarily have been a ground of strife. The real difference lay in the character of the men composing the two parties. The Girondins were cultured enthusiasts, incapable of organizing a political "machine" and creditably disgusted with the Commune. The men of the Mountain, on the other hand, were no less devoted to the public weal than the Girondins, and no less philosophically inclined; but they were men of action rather than words, and knew how to organize and control the proletariat of Paris. In consequence, they were ready to coöperate with the Commune, of which some of them were members. The struggle was, therefore, not for liberty, but for mastery; not between the privileged and unprivileged, but between the representatives of the middle class of the departments and the representatives of the proletariat of Paris.

The struggle began by the Girondins, who were in the majority, endeavoring, in opposition to the Constitution of 1791, to obtain a seat on the floor of the Convention for Roland, a minister. The proposal was undoubtedly wise, but the Mountain opposed it strongly. The struggle grew bitter, until Danton put an end to the matter by saying that if M. Roland was

[1] How thoroughly the Girondins represented the departments is shown by the fact that in Paris they were able to elect only one representative to the Convention.

to be admitted to the Convention, Madame Roland had better be admitted also!

The Girondins had in the Legislative Assembly attempted to investigate the September massacres, and in the Convention they followed up the matter by accusing Robespierre of aiming at a dictatorship, and by attacking Marat for proposing that very thing. Both attacks resulted only in giving the two men greater popularity among their constituencies and in winning the implacable hatred of the Mountain. Nor were the Girondins any more fortunate in their proposal to give the Convention a guard of three thousand men from the departments. It was their fatal mistake always to threaten and not to act, to debate and not to organize. The very departments they trusted were later to be discovered among the supporters of their enemies.

The Mountain's attack upon the Girondins had the support of the "sovereigns" in the gallery, the Commune, and the poorer wards. It charged them with being federalists—that is, with seeking to make each department in France a separate state and the nation simply a federation—and with being royalists because they were not willing to go to extremes in their attack upon the imprisoned king. Yet during the latter months of 1792, while the French armies were wonderfully successful on the frontiers, the Girondins were able to control the Convention. They continued to waste time, however, over the September massacres, which, as Danton said, had become ancient history. But one great problem, whose solution would determine who really were the masters

of the Swamp and the Convention, was yet to be solved — the disposition of Citizen Louis Capet, ex-king of France. Little by little the cause of the king and the Girondins became united. Since the 10th of August Louis had been kept a prisoner in the old fortress of the Knights Templar, known as the Temple, and with him also the members of his family. But the hatred shown him by the people of Paris was not satisfied with deposition and imprisonment. It declared that he was in league with the foreign invaders, and that he must be tried for treason. The Girondins were willing that he should be tried, and even moved that a committee be formed to examine the papers found on the 10th of August, but they were not willing that he should be executed. The Jacobins, on the contrary, through Robespierre, declared that, traitor or not, the death of Louis was a political necessity. It is in this light that the trial granted him by the Girondins is to be regarded. It is true that new evidence, more or less compromising, was found in an iron box of the king's own manufacture; but after all, the Convention did not have the evidence we now possess, and the real grounds on which Louis was condemned were political, not legal.

Three questions were put to the Convention, and each had to be answered by each delegate aloud:

1. Is Louis guilty of conspiracy? Six hundred and eighty-three of seven hundred and thirty-nine members voted yes. Not one voted no.

2. Shall sentence be referred to the people? Four hundred and twenty-four voted no.

3. What shall be the penalty of conviction? On

this last question voting continued through the night of January 16 and the day of January 17, 1793. In the galleries was the wild crowd pricking each vote with pins in cards, howling, cursing, threatening. Every deputy knew his future, and perhaps his life, hung upon his vote. Many of the best men believed Louis must die for the nation, many timid men were terrified into submission. At last, amid deepest silence, Vergniaud, president of the day, declared the vote. Seven hundred and twenty-one deputies were present. Three hundred and sixty-one were needed for a decision. Besides 26, who voted for death and delay, 361 voted for death.

Three days later came a final struggle for delay in executing the sentence. But the Convention voted 380–310 that it should be executed immediately. On the next morning, the 21st of January, 1793, the unfortunate man, who, as he told his counsel, had been unable during two hours' consideration to discover that he had ever given his people cause for reproach,[1] after a painful interview with his family, was taken from his cell and carried to the guillotine. He attempted to address the crowd on the scaffold, but his voice was drowned in the roar of drums, and a second later Louis added another to the short list of monarchs who have died like criminals.[2] It was not merely the fault of the times, so fearfully out of joint and so madly bound to be rejointed. There is indisputable evidence that Louis had been guilty of

[1] Such a statement can hardly stand as correct. Louis had been in constant communication with the enemies of France.

[2] The various orders for the conduct of the execution are now preserved in the Carnavallet Museum in Paris. Some good sources declare that Louis was allowed to finish his address.

unfaithfulness to the constitution he had sworn to maintain. Yet this evidence was not known to the Convention, and even a modern student, recalling the unfortunate man's good intentions, and how simply and nobly he passed his last hours, is almost ready to forget his share in bringing about his own downfall.

The fall of Louis meant much to the Girondins. They had been beaten in their half-hearted struggle for moderate action; the radical party of Danton and Marat had triumphed. From the trial of the king the final struggle between the now comparatively moderate Girondins and the Mountain increased daily.

There was little excuse for the struggle. France needed united leaders rather than party struggles. England, under the influence of Burke, and angry at the loss of trade monopolies through the opening of the Scheldt to unrestricted commerce, had been growing increasingly hostile to the Revolution, and on December 31, 1792, had refused to recognize the minister of the French Republic. More overt acts of hostility followed, and February 1st the Convention declared war against England and Holland; and March 7th against Spain. A levy of three hundred thousand men was laid upon the nation, and commissioners with unlimited powers were sent to quiet the rapidly disintegrating departments. Nevertheless, the future darkened. On March 9th the great coalition of all Europe was formed against France; two days later the peasants of the Vendée as one man rose in arms against forced service in the army of a republic they hated because of its treatment of the church; March 18th came the disastrous defeat of

Dumouriez at Neerwinden; on April 4th came the news that Custine had abandoned Mayence, and, what was more appalling, that Dumouriez had gone over to the enemy. It was no time for dissensions. Divided counsels might destroy the state. The real greatness of Danton appears at this crisis. In his speech of March 10th he said: "What matters my reputation? May France be free and my name forever sullied! . . . . Let us fight. Let us conquer our liberty. Extend your energies in every direction. Let the rich listen to my words. Our conquests must pay our debts, or else the rich will have to pay them before long. The situation is a cruel one. . . . . We must break out of the situation by a great effort. Let us conquer Holland. Let us reanimate the republican party in England. Let us make France march forward, and we shall go down glorious to posterity. Fulfill your great destiny. No more debates, no more quarrels, and the country is saved."

But with a foolish arrogance of superiority the Girondins, notwithstanding many offers on the part of Danton, whose whole interest lay in saving France from the foreigner, refused to unite with his party, charging it with being stained with the blood of the September massacres. Such a refusal was unfortunate both for France and themselves. The Girondins, although they still were able to control a majority of the house, were incapable of bringing any sort of success to their arms, or order to the state. There is, indeed, scarcely a measure of importance traceable to them during the months of their leadership, and their attack upon the Mountain was no more suicidal

for themselves than dangerous to France. They justly fell before a party which at heart was no more revolutionary, but which saw the need of the moment and was preëminently the party of action.

The final struggles came about through an effort to control the agitators of Paris by a committee of twelve, but even more immediately by a new attack upon Marat, who had stung the Girondins to madness by nicknaming them "the little statesmen." The Girondins were able to bring about a vote to send Marat before the newly established revolutionary tribunal—only to have him promptly and unanimously acquitted by judges who were by no means the creatures of the Mountain.

The month of May was devoted to preparations for the last struggle. The Girondins were divided among themselves and averse to extreme measures. The Commune came to the aid of the Mountain, and again looked to the mob. It was a bitter time, too full of complicated debate and voting to be easily followed, but the last three days of struggle were a French Pride's Purge. Just as the king had been brought to Paris by insurrection, as he had been intimidated and at last deposed by insurrection, so now the party of moderation—or better, inaction—was to be intimidated and deposed by insurrection. On May 31st and June 1st the Commune attempted to bring about the fall of the Girondins, but failed, once because the Convention unexpectedly adopted measures intended to precipitate disturbance, and once because Saturday was pay-day, and the poorer sections preferred wages to riots. But on Sunday,

June 2d, plans were better laid. A special troop of roughs was hired at forty sous per day, and together with other armed men, formed into a sort of insurrectionary army. Backed by this force, the Commune, through its representatives, demanded that the Convention vote the arrest of about thirty-seven of its members, including twenty-two prominent Girondins. This demand was refused.

Thereupon the Convention was surrounded by armed men. In solemn procession, with the president at their head, the deputies went forth to reconnoiter. They found that there was no mistake; they were all prisoners. In the presence of soldiers, Marat summoned the deputies to return to their seats. Couthon, with partiotic cynicism said: "You see, gentlemen, that you are respected and obeyed by the people, and that you can vote on the question which is submitted to you. Lose no time, then, in complying with their wishes." Unable to leave their hall, tired of the prolonged struggle, quieting their consciences by not voting at all, the great majority of the Convention allowed the Mountain to vote that thirty-one deputies should be put under arrest. They were not imprisoned, but were allowed to go about at will. But they no longer had a voice in the Convention, and with their expulsion the triumph of the Mountain was complete. The party of inefficient theorists, the champions of an impossible nation composed of thousands of all but independent municipalities, had gone down before the party of action, at once the idols of a "sovereign" people and the champions of a centralized government compared with which Bourbon absolutism was constitutional monarchy. At last France was to be governed.

# CHAPTER XVI

## THE REIGN OF TERROR AS A POLITICAL EXPERIMENT[1]

I. The Immediate Effects of the *Coup d'Etat* of June 2, 1793. II. The Circumstances Giving Rise to the Reign of Terror: 1. The Crisis in France; 2. The Supposed Failure of Ordinary Bases of Constitutional Government; 3. The Terror not Anarchic. III. The Terror: 1. Instituted by the Organization of the Committee of Public Safety; 2. The Government Declared Revolutionary. IV. The Instruments of the Terror: 1. The Committee of Public Safety; 2. The Committee of General Security; 3. The Revolutionary Tribunal, the *Sans-Culotte* Army, the Local Tribunals; 4. The "Deputies on Mission"; 5. The Terrorists' Principle Definitely Stated.

The immediate results of the *coup d'état* of June 2, 1793, were, on the one hand, the supremacy of the Mountain and of the Commune, but on the other, the increase of the dangers by which France was beset. Several of the Girondin leaders, including Barbaroux and Buzot, left Paris, and endeavored to head a revolt of the departments against the Convention. The nation as a whole was by no means ready to submit to the irresponsible rule of Paris, and four of the largest cities of France, Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux, and Caen, rose in rebellion. In each of these towns the Jacobin influence had been supreme, but in each the *bourgeoisie* without difficulty regained possession of

[1] In general, see Stephens, *French Revolution*, II, chs. 9, 10; Taine, *French Revolution*, bk. vii, chs. 1–3; Mignet, *French Revolution*, ch. 8; Von Sybel, *French Revolution*, III, 84–118.

the municipal government and prepared to resist the Convention. Could they have combined under some competent leader, these cities might have put an end to the Commune's influence; but here again the inefficiency of the Girondins showed itself, and the Convention was able to deal with each city independently, while the Girondins themselves were declared outlaws.[1] This half-hearted effort at civil war therefore failed, but none the less for the time being it constituted a real danger to the Convention, and gave apparent justification for extreme measures. The permanence of the republic seemed to depend upon the masses rather than upon the *bourgeoisie*. So far had political indifference done its work.

The danger from foreign war was vastly greater and of immeasurable influence upon the course of the Revolution. Had there been no war, the dissensions between the Girondins and the Mountain would in all probability have arisen, but the Terror would hardly have been endured. As it was, France patriotically submitted to the Committee of Public Safety, since it alone seemed capable of so organizing the state as to beat back the foreigners. The awful mistake of the Girondin war policy is therefore patent. The war brought the Terror.

When the Mountain, with the aid of the Paris Commune, finally, though without bloodshed, had suppressed the champions of Greek and Roman sentimentality, and was able to act as well as debate, it

[1] Such of them as had not left Paris were subsequently guillotined, and those who had gone to raise the departments, after months of adventures and hiding, perished miserably almost to a man. Pétion, the former mayor of Paris, and Buzot, the lover of Madame Roland, committed suicide. Guadet, Salle, Barbaroux, and others were guillotined. Louvet returned to Paris to visit his mistress, and later escaped.

saw Holland, Portugal, the Two Sicilies, the Roman States, Sardinia and Piedmont, Spain, Austria, Prussia, England, united against France; French ports blockaded by the most powerful navy in the world; the departments rising to avenge the Girondins; the French armies everywhere defeated; Dumouriez, the greatest commander of the French armies, gone over to the enemy; a third of the territory of France, including Vendée and many great cities, in open and successful insurrection; the *assignats* rapidly depreciating; and throughout the nation misery, poverty, and approaching anarchy. No government was ever beset with greater or more desperate needs, and no government ever proceeded more relentlessly to bring success to its armies, order to its domestic affairs, food to its poor, annihilation to rebellion. But on what could government be based? Not on the constitutions, for millions of Frenchmen were in arms against constitutions; not on the past, for the Old Régime and the Constitutionalists of 1789-91 were the Mountain's bitterest opponents; not on the armies, for generals might at any moment imitate Dumouriez or La Fayette; not on the ready assent of law-abiding citizens, for the *bourgeoisie* were enemies of the Jacobins. The question was as legitimate as pressing, and the Mountain's answer was *Upon Terror*. If men would not obey government from love, they must be made to obey from fear.[1] The action was only a rig-

[1]See Danton's speech of September 5, 1793, Stephens, *Orators of the French Revolution*, II, 262; Barère's speech of September 5, 1793, *Moniteur*, Year I, No. 251; Robespierre's speech of 17th Pluviôse; Buchez et Roux, *Hist. Parl.*, XXXI, 268 290; *Moniteur*, Year II, No. 251; the law of 22d Prairial, *Moniteur*, Year II, No. 264. For the application of the principle to national problems, see Wallon, *La Terreur*, II, 341-352; Mortimer-Ternaux, *La Terreur*, VIII, liv. 46-48.

orous application of the dominant political philosophy of Rousseau: the sovereign people must be obeyed.

It is therefore a fundamental mistake to think of the Terror as a carnival of brute passion or the outcome of anarchic forces become ascendant. This was true of certain days, like October 5 and 6, 1789, and especially of the work of the Commune during the interregnum of August 10–September 20, 1792, and of the work of certain agents of the Convention, but utterly false in the case of the government by committees between June, 1793, and July, 1794. The Terrorists were seekers after order, not after anarchy, and while it lasted the Terror was a genuine experiment in politics—crude, hideous, and never to be confounded with the work of the generous idealists of the Constituent Assembly; but in a politically ignorant and morally weak nation like France, possessing not a single man of first-rate ability among its legislators, probably inevitable. It was all but foreseen by Mirabeau when he failed to induce the court to regard the work of the Constituent Assembly seriously and to accept its results sincerely. But more than all, it was implicit in the absolutism and the morals of the Old Régime.

The legal basis, so to speak, of the new government was found in the declaration of martial or revolutionary law for the entire nation. The Convention had been summoned to draw up a new Constitution, and had fulfilled its purpose when, on June 24, 1793, the report of its committee was adopted.[1] The new

[1] This Constitution was the second proposed to the Convention, the other being that of the Girondins, and drawn up by Condorcet. According to this proposed Constitution the executive was to consist of seven ministers and a

Constitution was a codification of Jacobin Rousseauism. The people were declared to be the seat of all power, and the government was to consist of a Legislative Assembly and an Executive Council of twenty-four ministers, chosen by the Assembly. The most remarkable feature of this instrument was the *referendum* provision, according to which every law of exceptional importance was to be referred to the people for approval. In some respects, notably in its municipal administration, it resembled the Constitution of 1791, but was much simpler. The weakening of the executive, as well as the difficulty of putting any new Constitution into effect during the crisis resulting from the war, led the Mountain, October 10, 1793, to suspend this Constitution until a general peace, and France passed into the hands of the Convention. Singularly enough, the practical result of this change was to place France in something the same constitutional condition as England under the government of the House of Commons, the actual executive being not the ministers, who became hardly more than clerks, but the great Committee of Public Safety. That which Mirabeau had urged, the sharing of the ministers, as representatives of the executive, in the legislative body's deliberations, was now brought about in fact—though

secretary elected by the primary assemblies, each of 450 to 900 members. These ministers were simply to carry out the decrees of the legislative body, an Assembly of one chamber. The initiative in legislation was not to be confined to the Assembly, but any citizen could propose a new law, the repeal of an old law, or a vote of censure of any act of administration, and this had to be considered by the Assembly if favored by the primary assemblies of his department. The principle of election was carried to an extreme, and the Constitution as a whole is a most striking illustration of the impracticable spirit of the Girondins. The entire scheme was elaborated with the intention of making party spirit and the election of popular leaders impossible. See Stephens, *French Revolution*, II, 530–533; Biré, *La Légende des Girondins*, ch. 7; Guadet, *Les Girondins*, 228–242.

not in name—by the very elements by which it had formerly been opposed.

The Committee of Public Safety was in large measure due to Danton's desire for a strong executive to free France from the foreigner. It had been appointed as early as April 7, 1793, but was of relatively small importance until August 1, when Danton procured for it a credit of ten million dollars, to be spent as it judged best, and the Convention intrusted to it the execution of a number of important laws providing for the confiscation of the property of all outlaws, the arrest of all foreigners not domiciled in France, the condemnation to twenty years' imprisonment of all those refusing to take the *assignats* at their face value, and the conduct of the war in the Vendée. A few days later the Committee was given full direction of the foreign war. Such powers demanded new members, and Carnot and Prieur-Duvernois were added to care for military affairs. On September 5, 1793, a number of decrees were issued, which, as Barère moved, made "terror the order of the day." These decrees established the Revolutionary *sans-culotte* army, divided the Revolutionary Tribunal into sections to facilitate its work, and ordered the revolutionary committees "purified." On September 6th two men who had been concerned with the September massacres of the year previous, Billaud-Varennes and Collot d'Herbois, were made members of the Committee of Public Safety to take charge of Terror, as Carnot had charge of military affairs. Danton, though elected to membership, and the champion of the Committee in the Convention,

would not accept a position upon it. He had sworn not to become a member of any executive body, and as a matter of fact he was not well fitted for detailed administrative work. Perhaps, too, as Marat cuttingly said, he "preferred an upholstered chair to a throne!" The suspension of the Constitution in October left the committee the real governor of France.

As finally organized the Committee of Public Safety was composed of twelve men,[1] all well educated, three belonging to the nobility and the others to the *bourgeoisie*. Seven of them had been lawyers; two royal engineers; one a Protestant pastor; one an actor and dramatist; one a law student. Two only were Parisians. None of them, if we may possibly except Carnot, was in any degree specially gifted or fitted for the great task which they undertook, but all were desperately in earnest and, in their own mad way, genuinely devoted to the Republic. Seven of them were poor speakers, and only three, Robespierre and his two followers, Saint Just and Couthon, a small minority were thorough followers of Rousseau.

The actual work of administration was divided among the members, Carnot caring for the army, André for the navy, Lindet for economic matters, Saint Just for constitutional legislation, and Robespierre for "education" and "public spirit." Each member of the committee, however, signed its decrees, and it reported as a whole through Barère to the

[1] Their names and ages in 1793 were as follows: Saint-André, 44; Barère, 38; Couthon, 38; Herault de Séchelles, 33; Prieur of the Marne, 33; Saint Just, 26; Robert Lindet, 50; Robespierre, 35; Carnot, 40; Prieur-Duvernois, 30; Collot d' Herbois, 43; Billaud-Varennes, 33. Stephens, *French Revolution*, II, 288-315, gives brief biographies of each.

Convention. Until the fall of the Dantonists in April, 1794, Robespierre cannot be said to have been in any sense a dictator. The final step in the Committee's control over France was taken December 4, 1793, when the Convention decreed that it should be in charge of all constituted authorities and public officers, and that it should nominate and receive the reports of all deputies on mission. Centralization could not have been more complete.[1]

Subordinate to this Committee of Public Safety was the Committee of General Security, consisting of twenty-one members, whose duty it was to maintain order in Paris and throughout France. It was composed of men of honesty and determination, good Jacobins, but more friendly to Billaud-Varennes than to Robespierre. The chief agent of this latter committee was the Revolutionary Tribunal of Paris, inaugurated as early as March 10th, and whose origin may be traced to Danton.[2] Its office was that of frightening the people of Paris and France into submission to the Committee of Public Safety by mercilessly arresting, trying, and probably executing, any person suspected of disloyalty to the Republic. It was finally reorganized at the formal institution of the Terror, on September 5th, and a few weeks later was made to consist of sixteen judges, sixty jurors, a public accuser, and five substitutes.[3] As a sort of assistant

[1]Even the ministries were abolished in April, 1794. A complete account of the doings of this committee is given in Aulard, *Recueil des Actes du Comité de Salut public.*

[2]The great work on this tribunal is Wallon, *L'Histoire du Tribunal révolutionnaire.*

[3]The public accuser was Fouquier-Tinville, perhaps the most selfish, cold-blooded brute the Revolution produced. Herein he differed from such men as Marat, who were bloodthirsty from — paradoxical as it may seem — motives of patriotism and genuine love of the masses.

to this tribunal there was established a revolutionary army of 5,000 infantry and 1,200 gunners, all *sans culottes*, who traveled over France with a movable guillotine.[1] Local tribunals, also, were everywhere established, whose duty it was to search out suspected persons, and pronouncing them guilty, to send them to Paris for further examination and sentence. Nor was this all. The Convention, not trusting to the energy of the local boards, took upon itself the immediate control of the most important centers through its members delegated for that purpose, who reported to the Committee of Public Safety. Two of these "deputies on mission" were also in every army, watching over the general, seeing that he never faltered or showed the least signs of defection. At their word he might be arrested and sent on to Paris, there to be tried.

And throughout this simple governmental system ran the principle of the Terror: maintenance of the Republic by the masses through the daily legal execution of genuine or suspected enemies. In October, 1793, the guillotine in Paris began its systematized work, and in that month 50 persons were executed, including the unfortunate Marie Antoinette[2] and twenty-one prominent Girondins. In November 58 were executed, including Philippe Egalité, formerly the Duke of Orleans, notwithstanding he had voted for

[1]The guillotine was invented by a philanthropic Dr. Guillotin, who wished to substitute in capital punishment an instrument sure to produce instant death in the place of the bungling process of beheading with a sword. The guillotine is still used in France. It consists of two upright posts between which a heavy knife rises and falls. The criminal is stretched upon a board and then pushed between the posts. The knife falls and instantly beheads him.

[2]On the trial of Marie Antoinette, perhaps as brutal as any trial in history, see Wallon, *Tribunal révolutionnaire*, V, ch. 10.

the death of Louis XVI., and Madame Roland, whose traditional words on the scaffold were a veritable epitome of the republican régime, "O Liberty, how many crimes are committed in thy name!" In December, 69 were executed; in January, 1794, 71; in February, 73; in March, 127; in April, 257; in May, 353; in June and July, 1,376. This sudden increase in the number of executions was due to the efforts of Robespierre to establish his Utopia.

# CHAPTER XVII

## THE REPUBLIC UNDER THE TERROR[1]

I. The Suppression and Punishment of Counter-Revolution: 1. Preventive Measures; 2. The Vendée; 3. Carrier at Nantes; 4. Auvergne; 5. Lyons; 6. Marseilles and Bordeaux; 7. Toulon. II. The Conduct of Foreign War: 1. The Deputies on Mission in the Armies; 2. French Victories. III. The Administration of the State: 1. Poor *vs.* Rich; 2. The *Maximum* and Other Laws in Favor of the Masses; 3. The Constructive Legislation of the Terror; 4. Life under the Terror.

After the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, his widow received a medal struck by the French liberals, on which, among other sentiments, was this: "He saved the Republic without veiling the statue of liberty." The Committee of Public Safety saved France, to use Marat's words, by a "despotism of liberty." Avowedly the Terror sprang from a determination to maintain the new rights which had been gained by the Constituent Assembly. That these were by no means assured is evident from the threats of the *émigrés* and the Coalition, yet it is not probable that

[1] In general, see Stephens, *French Revolution*, II, chs. 10-12; Thiers, *French Revolution*, II, 336-372; Von Sybel, *French Revolution*, III, 159-258; Taine, *French Revolution*, III, 352-419. There are many historical novels covering the Reign of Terror, the best of which are Félix Gras, *The Terror;* Victor Hugo, *1793;* Erckmann-Chatrian, *Year One of the Republic*, although the latter is more concerned with the military operations. Other novels are Dickens, *Tale of Two Cities;* Mitchell, *The Story of François;* William Sage, *Robert Tournay*. The great works are Wallon, *La Tribunal revolutionnaire;* Gros, *Le Comite de Salut public;* and Mortimer-Ternaux, *La Terreur*. The most valuable collections of sources are Aulard, *Recueil des Actes du Comite de Salut public*, and the *Archives Parlementaires*. Buchez et Roux is of less value from the governmental point of view.

even a counter-revolution could have undone the work of the political and social evolution that found expression in the decrees of August 4, 1789. But the Republic had traveled far from that day. The work of the Legislative Assembly had been less that of reform than of punishing disloyalty, and by the beginning of 1793, as far as the popular leaders were concerned, the fear of the loss of liberties had come really to mean fear for themselves. Counter-revolution meant not only the return of confiscated property and the reëstablishment of the monarchy; it meant revenge. Clergy and nobles were no more eager to recover their lost privileges than to bring the Jacobins to punishment, and the French defeats of the early part of 1793 made the probability of their success strong. These two motives, therefore, the one genuinely patriotic and the other personal, lay behind the measures taken by the Convention through its various committees and agents, while the intense class hatred between the masses of the cities and the *bourgeoisie* was an added source both of suspicion and of severity.

The three great dangers confronting France in 1793 were counter-revolution, foreign war, and anarchy.

As far as counter-revolution went, the measures of the Convention were both preventive and punitive. To make certain of the loyalty of all citizens, every person had to carry about constantly a properly countersigned "civic card." As the Terror developed, it took ever less evidence to make a person a "suspect." Any man who was of noble birth, who had held office under the Old Régime, who was a servant or relative of an "emigrant," any one who could not show that

he had made some sacrifice for the Revolution—all such were legally declared to be suspects, liable to instant arrest and summary trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal.[1] By the law of April 16, 1794, all those who lived without doing anything and complained of the Revolution were to be transported to Guiana. Even the Jacobin Club had to be "purified," and its members were obliged to answer the question, "What have you done to deserve punishment in case of the reinstatement of the enemies of the Republic?"

Actual counter-revolution was punished in a way that beggars description. By far the most serious outbreak against the Convention was that in the Vendée, a department of about 2,600 square miles, lying on the Bay of Biscay between the Loire and La Rochelle. It was peopled by sturdy but ignorant peasants, who had welcomed the States General, but who had been alienated from the Revolution by the laws against nonjuring priests. Riots had broken out in 1791, and a somewhat serious revolt had been crushed in the following year; but the law of February 25, 1793, ordering a levy *en masse*, threw the entire region into actual rebellion. The Vendeans would not fight for the Republic, and under the leadership of members of the lower nobility and self-elected captains of the peasants, defeated the republican armies.[2] In June, 1793, their

[1] A good brief account of the laws against suspects is in Wallon, *La Terreur*, II, 1–22.

[2] On the rebellion in the Vendée, the literature is voluminous. Stephens, *French Revolution*, II, 259 n., gives some of the principal French literature. Reference may, however, be especially made to Lescure, *Memoires sur La Vendée;* Chassin, *La Preparation de la Guerre de Vendée*, *La Vendee Patriote*, and *Les Pacifications de l'Ouest;* Jephson, *The Real French Revolutionist*, gives a full account of the Vendean war, but is violently partisan in his sympathies with the peasants. His work also contains a full bibliography to 1899.

commander-in-chief, Cathelineau, a former postillion, proclaimed the little Louis XVII., then a prisoner in the Temple, king. No quarter was given by either peasants or the republican troops, and the war became indescribably cruel. The Vendeans defeated Westermann, and the new generals of the Republic, no longer professional soldiers, but a goldsmith, a printer, and a comic actor, were equally unsuccessful. Even the regular French troops under Kleber did not at first escape defeat. By the middle of October, 1793, however, the incompetent generals were superseded, and the peasants were utterly routed, most of their leaders killed, and armed resistance was limited to small bands. Then the Committee of Public Safety undertook to punish the unfortunate department. Troops were sent into all portions of it, and during the first three months of 1794 they burnt villages, executed peasants, and spread desolation as widely as possible. In the mean time the Terror had been established (October 19, 1793) in the great city of Nantes by the deputy Carrier, a provincial lawyer of no reputation and less character. His method was not that of the Revolutionary Tribunal in Paris, the systematic but legal condemnation and execution of political criminals; the Vendean prisoners numbered thousands, and the guillotine worked too slowly to suit this republican tyrant. Prisoners who had actually borne arms against the Republic, to the number of at least 1,800, were shot in batches, utterly without trial. Finding even this process too slow, Carrier invented the *noyades*, or "drownings." The wretched men and women were stripped

naked, bound, and sent out by companies in old vessels, which were sunk in the Loire. Perhaps 2,000 Vendean prisoners were thus killed within less than two months. Then Carrier attacked the *bourgeoisie*, and 323 persons, including most of the old officers of the region and 132 prominent and wealthy citizens, were sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal at Paris.

The horrors of the situation were ever on the increase. Men and women were bound together in "republican marriages,"[1] as Carrier said, and thrown into the Loire. The mouth of the river was stopped with corpses, and thousands of the inhabitants of the city died from the pestilence resulting from unburied bodies. In the mean time, Carrier conducted himself most scandalously, making his brief sway a continuous orgy. But atrocity which did not make toward public order was not in accord with the plans of the Committee of Public Safety. However ready it may have been to execute nobles and *bourgeois*, it did not wish the masses to hate the Republic. Almost as soon as Carrier's actions were known, the Committee's agent, Julien, a boy of nineteen, was sent to investigate. At considerable personal risk he reported (January 21, 1794) the awful condition of the city, and two weeks later vehemently urged the removal of the deputy. February 8th, the Committee recalled Carrier, and although the Terror continued, his atrocities were not repeated. The Vendée, however, had been driven to new revolt, and was pacified only years

[1] It is true that these marriages have been denied (see Wallon, *Les Représentants en Mission*, I, 422, seq.), but they are distinctly mentioned in the trial of Carrier.

after by the Directory (August, 1796). Carrier himself went unpunished by the Committee, but was guillotined soon after the fall of Robespierre.[1] This was the only important case in which the measures of the Committee of Public Safety failed to produce the desired order, and even here all real danger to the Republic was, at least for the time, ended.

Another royalist rebellion, although on a much smaller scale than that in the Vendée, broke out in upper Auvergne. It was there that the miniature religious war at Jalès and a widespread conspiracy of the nobility had been crushed as early as 1792. In 1793 Charrier, an emissary of the Count d'Artois, organized a new revolt, which for some time met with considerable success. By May 31st, however, the government had taken such precautions that the movement collapsed. Two deputies were thereupon sent by the Committee of Public Safety to establish the Terror in the departments adjacent to the scene of the revolt. All prisoners who had actually taken arms were executed, and hundreds of poor lace-women were imprisoned and killed because they wished to begin their work with prayer and, for some reason, refused to take the oath of fidelity to the Republic.

Those cities which, like Lyons, Marseilles, and Bordeaux, had risen, partly because of a desire for the municipal independence granted by the Constitution of 1791, partly in behalf of the Girondins, and partly against the rule of the masses, were subjected to fear-

[1] At the least calculation five thousand persons were killed in Nantes. Stephens, *French Revolution*, II, 392. Von Sybel, *French Revolution*, III, 257, says fifteen thousand. For full details, see Wallon, *La Tribunal révolutionnaire*, V, 326-344; Jephson, *The Real French Revolutionist*.

ful punishment.[1] October 12, 1793, the Convention decreed that Lyons, which had offered the most obstinate resistance to the armies of the Republic, should be annihilated, and the name of its site changed to Commune-Affranchie. The decree was never literally obeyed, for even Couthon, a member of the Committee, was unwilling to do more than destroy forty houses. But the Committee could not let the opportunity of establishing the Terror in the provinces pass, and Collot d'Herbois himself was sent on mission to the city. Though by no means the equal of Carrier in brutality, with the aid of a *sans-culotte* army he instituted wholesale massacres in addition to the executions by the guillotine, and nearly 2,000 persons of all classes perished during five months.[2]

Marseilles, because of its importance as a base of military operations against Toulon, as well as because of its public spirit, suffered less severely, although 406 persons were executed. Here, as in Lyons and the Vendée, it should be recalled, the victims were those who had actually been in arms against the Republic.

It is characteristic of the arbitrariness with which the deputies acted that the Terror at Bordeaux was greatly mitigated during its later days by the fact that Tallien, a young man of twenty-five, came under the influence of a beautiful and tender-hearted woman of nineteen—a fact that nearly brought him his death in Paris. Yet in Bordeaux 301 persons perished.

[1] The hatred of these cities was greatly increased by the fact that Marat had been assassinated (July 13, 1793) by Charlotte Corday, a sympathizer with the Girondins.

[2] It should be added, however, in justice to the administration of Collot d'Herbois that 1,684 persons were also acquitted—a fact going far to show that the Terror in the hands of anyone but a brute like Carrier did not rest upon indiscriminate massacre.

But next to the Vendée, the greatest victim of punishment inflicted upon those who revolted against the Republic was Toulon. There the *bourgeoisie* had not submitted readily to the rule of the Jacobins, and on August 3, 1793, they joined with the royalists, imprisoned the two deputies on mission in the city, and surrendered to the English. Toulon was then held by the English and Spanish in behalf of the little Louis XVII.,[1] was strongly fortified, and its harbor was filled with the allied fleets. The republican armies immediately besieged the city, but with no result until Napoleon Bonaparte, at that time an obscure captain in the artillery, advised capturing a promontory commanding the harbor. After weeks of fighting this was accomplished, the fleets withdrew, and Toulon fell (December 19, 1793). As in the case of the other cities, it was delivered over to punishment, and by January 4, 1794, as Barras, the deputy on mission, wrote the Committee of Public Safety, every one who had been employed in the navy and the army of the rebels, or the naval or military administration, had been killed.[2] As in Nantes and Lyons, hundreds were shot in batches, four hundred men, for instance, who met the deputy Fréron at the dockyards, being killed

[1] The fate of this little boy will always remain in doubt. As far as certainty goes we can say only that he was separated from his mother, and put in charge of a brutal keeper, Simon. On June 8, 1795, a child said to be the dauphin died in the Temple. There have always been those, however, who claimed that the dauphin was carried to America. An interesting summary of the case is given in Latimer, *My Scrap-book of the French Revolution*, 1408, seq. See also Louis Blanc, *Révolution française*, XII, ch. 2. For the accepted account of Simon's brutalities, see Von Sybel, IV, 320-328; and Chantelauze, *Louis XVII.*

[2] The horrors of war were never better illustrated than at Toulon when the English ships fired upon the crowds of fugitives who were seeking safety in them, in order to prevent overloading. Four thousand of the citizens of Toulon were crowded into the English vessels when they finally left the city to its fate.

on the spot. Fréron is said to have even attempted to exterminate the entire population, but the troops refused to turn butchers, and the *sans-culotte* army succeeded in massacring only about 800 persons.

These instances must suffice to illustrate the fearful severity with which the Committee put down and punished revolt. If one looks at its conduct of foreign war, its energy appears as relentless, although not as brutal.[1] The first six months of 1793 had seen not only the revolt of the cities, but also the repeated defeat of the French armies. It was to prevent the threatened destruction of France that Danton had been eager to solidify the power of the great Committee. The levy *en masse* had resulted in sending 300,000 new troops to the armies, and before the year closed France had in the field fourteen armies, numbering at least 750,000 men. But discipline, arms, provisions, were lacking, and the royalist officers were justly suspected. To meet the first of these difficulties, Carnot turned all France into a manufactory of weapons and organized a tolerably efficient commissariat department. To supply energy, the Convention had recourse to its policy of deputies on mission. In every army there were two or more of these deputies with their eyes constantly on the generals, and merciless in their demands for victory. Never shunning dangers themselves, they more than once snatched victory from defeat by leading the troops. The generals of the raw levies knew that they must win if they were to live.

[1] A good summary of the military history of this critical year is given by Mahan, *The Influence of the Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire*, I, ch. 3. The best general account is that of Sorel, *L'Europe et la Revolution française*, III, bk. iii; IV, bk. i.

Failure was interpreted by the deputies and the Revolutionary Tribunal to mean treason, and not a few officers, like Westermann and Custine, expiated their defeats on the scaffold.[1] In January, 1794, it was voted that a condemned general should be executed at the head of his army.[2] And the result of this merciless patriotism was just what the Committee sought. France, it is true, was on the defensive, and the Coalition was but half-heartedly in the war. Austria and Prussia were hereditary foes, and as Mallet du Pau said in 1792, "Europe had no basis for a general resistance." But after all, the real source of the victories of the Republic lay in the new spirit breathed into the troops by these deputies. Promotion was certain, and out from the ranks there began to emerge the great soldiers of Napoleon. Never were armies more enthusiastic for their cause, or, thanks to Carnot, better directed. The success of the systematized Terror in the autumn of 1793 was in fact hardly short of miraculous. In June-July, France had faced absolute destruction. In September, 1793, the English were defeated at Hondschoote; October 15 and 16, Jourdan defeated the Austrians at Wattignies and opened up the Low Countries; in December, Pichegru defeated the Austrians again, tumbled them over the Rhine, and recaptured Worms and Spires. During the same time, it will be remembered, the Vendée had been subdued, Lyons and Toulon captured.

[1] For obvious reasons, this policy was not as successful in the navy as in the army. One cannot make men sailors by decrees. Yet the Convention attempted it—e. g., by voting death to any captain who surrendered to a force less than double his, and, if in charge of a ship-of-the-line, to any force unless his vessel was sinking. Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power*, etc., I, 95n.

[2] See Mortimer-Ternaux, *La Terreur*, VIII, 247–314.

The year 1794 found France delivered from all danger of invasion, and already carrying the war into foreign territory.

In administering the internal affairs of the Republic the Convention and the Committee of Public Safety were seriously handicapped by the expenditure required by the war, as well as by the almost complete destruction of commerce. From the beginning of the Jacobin period the popular leaders had turned their attention to incipient state-socialism, in which the rich were to be governed in the interest of the poor.[1] After the September massacres the personal property of the victims, to the value of millions, was confiscated by the Commune. The Commune also stripped the Tuileries and the other royal palaces of their gold and silver plate, and coined that of the churches. All export of silver and gold was forbidden, and the Assembly began to control the grain trade. "The poor man alone," said Robespierre, "is virtuous, wise, and fitted to govern." "The rich," said Marat, "have so long sucked out the marrow of the people that they are now visited with a crushing retribution." The rich were distinctly held to belong to a conquered party, and charged with "hoping for protection from the Austrians." The economic policy of the Convention grew distinctly socialistic in its tendencies. "To what purpose," some one said as early as August 16, 1792, "is the controversy about a republic or a monarchy? Create a government which will raise the poor man above his petty wants, and deprive

[1] On the inner condition of France during the Terror, see Goncourt, *Histoire de la Société française pendant la Revolution*; Williams, *Sketches of Manners, etc., in the French Republic*; Wallon, *La Terreur*, I, 168-178; II, 341-352.

the rich man of his superfluity, and you will thereby restore a perfect equilibrium." In fact, just as the Constituent Assembly destroyed the inequalities arising from the privileges of the Old Régime, the representatives of the people in the Convention endeavored to destroy the inequalities arising from wealth. The Legislative Assembly had confiscated the estates of the *émigrés*, and to help the *sans-culottes* offered them for sale in lots of two and three acres, to be paid for in small annual installments. A few weeks later (September 25-28) the Convention abolished all ground rents without compensation.[1] In May, a forced loan of $200,000,000 was levied on the rich, despite the opposition of the Girondins.[2] The *assignats*, which had depreciated to less than a sixth of their face value, were ordered to be taken at par under penalty of death. Twenty-five million francs were levied upon the clergy, nobility, and corporations of the recently conquered territory of Belgium. The tendency of speculators to take advantage of the blockade and the great demand for grain, and so raise its price, was met by the law of the *Maximum* (May 4, 1793), which declared that grain and flour should be sold at prices to be fixed by each Commune.[3] Later laws, with the aid of elaborate statistical tables, applied the principle to all articles of food, and offenders were punished with death. When farmers and dealers refused to put their goods on sale at the legal

[1] Von Sybel (II, 67) estimates the value of the landed property disposed of by these decrees at $1,200,000,000.

[2] See Mortimer-Ternaux, *La Terreur*, VIII, 332, Stourm, *Finances de l'Ancien Régime et de la Révolution*, II, 369-377.

[3] The law of Sept. 11, 1793, fixed the rate at that of 1790, plus one-third.

prices, the *sans-culotte* army dragged the unfortunate men before the Revolutionary Tribunal. Further laws limited the amount of bread one could buy, and made men and women stand in line at the bakeries. To prevent food being purchased before its arrival in Paris, the mayor threatened to do nothing to prevent the entire city's starving. Thanks to an abundant harvest in 1793, as well as to this legislation, so utterly in violation of ordinary economic laws, the proletariat of the cities was in a measure furnished with food, but the economic condition of France remained desperate. Agriculture suffered, with a million men taken from the fields to serve in the army, food sold at the *maximum* was poor and scarce, and the punishment inflicted on the cities had been the finishing blow to commerce and manufactures. The *bourgeois* were the chief sufferers, for the Convention cared for the masses. Their needs were provided for by assuring all good *sans-culottes* forty sous per day for attending the assemblies of their sections,[1] and by the law establishing a paid revolutionary *sans-culotte* army. At the same time, in direct violation of the grand watchwords, "Liberty and Equality," which were oftenest in men's mouths, and which the Commune of Paris had ordered every householder to inscribe over his door, and yet, as it believed, in the interest of the nation at large, the Committee of Public Safety suppressed freedom of thought, opened letters, instituted a secret police, destroyed the right of trial by jury.[2] Nor did the radicals of the

[1] For instance, 1,200 were supposed to be in attendance every day at each section in Paris. As matter of fact about 300 would be present and answer for those absent.

[2] For reports of this police during the Terror, see Schmidt, *Tableaux de la Révolution française*, II, 99–220.

Convention stop here. Their passion for regenerating every element in French life drove them to absurd extremes. They would have nothing that had belonged to the hated Old Régime. Every man was to be called "Citizen" rather than "Monsieur." The statues of the kings in the great church of St. Denis were mutilated, and the royal bones thrown into a ditch and covered with quicklime. For the same reason the calendar was changed. The year was divided into twelve months, each containing three weeks of ten days (*décades*), every tenth day (*décadi*) being for rest; the names of the months were changed, and the era made to date from the establishment of the Republic, September 21, 1792.[1]

Quite as revolutionary was the Convention's treatment of religion. The philosophy of the day and the struggle over the non-juring priests had made the Jacobins fierce haters of Christianity, and among the necessities of the regenerate nation and the new epoch they were establishing was a new religion. On November 7, 1793, Gobel, the Bishop of Paris, and his chief ecclesiastics appeared in the Convention and solemnly abjured the Christian faith. Their action was emulated by many of the sections of Paris.[2] As to what the new religion should be, the Commune and the Committee of Public Safety differed, but until Robespierre's brief supremacy, the Commune was able to

[1] The names of these months were (beginning September 22d) *Vendémiaire* (vintage-month), *Brumaire* (fog-month), *Frimaire* (frost-month) *Nivose* (snow-month), *Pluviose* (rain-month), *Ventose* (wind-month), *Germinal* (bloom-month), *Floréal* (flower-month), *Prairial* (meadow-month). The five extra days were called *sans-culottides*, and were holidays.

[2] Gobel himself may possibly, as Thiers asserts, have renounced only his ordination vows, but this qualification is not to be extended to his followers.

carry out its plans. As usual with this party of brutality, they were coarse and irrational. On November 10, 1793, the Convention established the Worship of Reason. Decked out in red liberty caps, the deputies went in a body to the cathedral of Notre Dame,[1] and consecrated it to the Goddess of Reason, whose representative, a beautiful actress, sat on the altar, while women of the town danced the *Carmagnole* in the nave. Then the "service" in the noble church degenerated into a shameless orgy.

This atheistic debauch was approved neither by the people at large, nor the Convention as a whole, nor even by all the Jacobin minority. It was one result of the influence of the Commune of Paris, under the lead of Hébert. As Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety gained influence, the cult of Reason was repressed, and France recalled to the better but no less revolutionary and anti-Christian worship of the Supreme Being. Even while "Reason" was being worshiped and most churches were closed[2] throughout France, in the few left open thousands of faithful women still worshiped as catholic Christians.

All of this legislation must be traced to a hatred of the Old Régime, and much of it to a desperate attempt to maintain order. There were other laws of a far different sort established by the Committee of

[1] Desecration of the churches by the Jacobins was common. At Lyons, during a festival given in honor of Chalier, a donkey was adorned with a mitre, made to drink out of a consecrated cup with a crucifix and Bible tied to his tail. Marat's heart was placed on a table in the Cordelier Club as an object of reverence. See Aulard, *Le Culte de la Raison et le Culte de l'Etre Suprême.*

[2] The Jacobin opposition to the churches may be seen from a request of the Society (December 25, 1793) that the Convention decree that in every town of four thousand inhabitants there should be built a hall where edifying spectacles could be given to help the people "forget the tricks of the priests." Schmidt, *Tableaux*, etc., II, 135, 136.

Public Safety the value of which one need not be an apologist of the Terror to appreciate. It is true, some of the proposals of Robespierre and Saint-Just were absurd, even for admirers of Rousseau and classical antiquity. A society in which there should be no servants, and no gold or silver vessels; in which boys from five to twelve and girls from five to eleven should be brought up in common at the expense of the Republic, and in which no child under sixteen years of age should eat meat; in which divorce should be free to all; in which friendship should be a public institution, every citizen being bound on attaining his majority to publish the names of his friends, or having none, to be banished; and in which the friends of a criminal should be banished—such a society even the Terror itself could hardly hope to establish. But if these men of blood were visionary, they must also be credited with having conceived many of those great social reforms that give value to modern life. While England and America imprisoned men for debt, the Convention abolished the practice; first of all sovereign powers it abolished negro slavery; in advance of even modern states, it protected the wife's claim upon property held in common with the husband; it first of all European governments outlined a system of public education, in which were included common schools,[1] manual training schools, technical schools, universities, a conservatory of arts, museums, and a polytechnic institute; pensions were given the needy;

[1] Children were to be taught to read by using the Declaration of Rights and the Constitution of 1793. Indeed the entire educational system was centered about patriotism. Boys were to be trained as soldiers, but, during harvest time, were to work in the fields. See Duruy, *L'Instruction publique et la Révolution*, esp. 164-172.

and, finally, that *Code* which Napoleon regarded as his greatest contribution to posterity, and which has been such an agent in guaranteeing political freedom upon the Continent of Europe, was itself begun and to a considerable degree completed by the Terrorists.

It is easy to say with Burke that during the Terror Frenchmen were of two classes, executioners and victims, but in the light of these facts the statement is quite untrue. The Terror was simply the frightful basis of a government looking toward an ideal state. No government ever worked harder for the good of the masses, and almost without exception the members of the great Committee were neither peculators nor bribe-takers. Robespierre and his few friends were poor and absolutely incorruptible. Nor was the Reign of Terror without its brighter side. The prisons were full of "suspects," but sad as was their fate, a merely cursory reading of the newspapers of the time, or of the reports of the secret police upon the state of Paris, shows that after the fear of foreign invasion had passed, life went on in Paris and in most of France much as before. Theaters were crowded, new books were published and reviewed, salons were held, cafés flourished, the market-women were told the Republic had no need of Joans of Arc, and suppressed. Indeed, for any one except a possible "suspect" life was probably no worse under the absolutism of the Committee of Public Safety than under that of Louis XVI. One might almost say that the masses of France were actually terrorized into happiness.[1]

[1] James Monroe was perhaps indiscreet in his admiration of the Revolution, but his observations were made on the ground. Among other things, he says, "I never saw in the countenances of men more apparent content with the lot they enjoy." See Hazen, *American Opinion*, etc., 124-126.

Criminals dared not show themselves. Men no longer feared the *lettre de cachet;* all were equal before the law; provisions were no longer in the hands of monopolies; military promotion was open to the peasant and artisan; lands could be bought by the poorest; education was free to all.

Had the Committee of Public Safety come under the influence of a really great man, France, during 1794, would almost certainly have gradually returned to a normal condition. But here again there was difficulty, for except Carnot and Danton the Republic had not produced a man of striking ability, and of these two Danton was to fall a victim to his own inertia and the brief supremacy of Robespierre, while Carnot was to lay the foundations for the military empire of Napoleon.

# CHAPTER XVIII

## THE DICTATORSHIP OF ROBESPIERRE[1]

I. The Struggle between the Commune and the Committee of Public Safety: 1. The Attack of Robespierre upon the Hébertists; 2. The Fall of the Hébertists. II. The Fall of the Dantonists: 1. Its Causes; 2. The Real Issue; 3. The Execution of the Dantonists. III. The Dictatorship of Robespierre: 1. His Relations to the Committee of Public Safety; 2. His Character; 3. His Ideal Republic; 4. Administrative Difficulties; 5. The Festival of the Supreme Being; 6. The Increase of the Terror. IV. The Fall of Robespierre: 1. Opposition to His Plans; 2. The Events of the 9th and 10th of Thermidor.

The events which had led to its establishment left the Republic in the control of two sets of leaders. On the one hand were the Convention and its committees, and on the other was the Commune of Paris, possessed of unlimited power over the proletariat of the capital, and dominated by brutal and anarchic men, at the head of whom was Hébert. For months after the establishment of the Republic these two governments coöperated alike for the administration of the state and the destruction of the Girondins; but by the autumn of 1793 Robespierre began to feel the difficulties of such a union, and, after the scandalous festival in honor of Reason, as a true follower of Rousseau and in the interest of his own ideal Republic,

[1] In general, see Thiers, *French Revolution*, II, 414-458; III, 1-108; Von Sybel, *French Revolution*, IV, 3-68; Taine, *French Revolution*, III, 145-168; Mignet, *French Revolution* (Bohn ed.), 234-272.

undertook to reduce the Commune to subjection to the Committee.

The struggle that ensued was not without its difficulties, and, so popular was Hébert, its dangers. It began with the ever-ready charge of conspiracy. Among the papers of the Committee of Public Safety is a sketch of a report written as early as November, 1793, in which Hébert is charged with a plot to send the leaders of the Convention to the guillotine, and then, with his friends, to take control of the state. The charge was not more improbable than many others which had sent men to the guillotine, but Hébert was at the time too strong in the Jacobin Club to be overcome. Robespierre's enmity was increased by the obscenity and lawlessness of Hébert's journal, the *Père Duchesne*, and by November his influence in the Committee was strong enough to warrant his beginning the conflict. On the 17th Robespierre denounced the Hébertists as engaged "in the basest of all crimes, counter-revolution under the mask of patriotism." He even succeeded in getting the alleged conspiracy referred to the Committee of General Security; but strange as it may seem to those who have been accustomed to think of him as always a dictator, he judged it unsafe to push the attack upon the city party farther. He therefore began to undermine Hébert's influence in the Club, by censuring his atheism and sacrilegious conduct. It was good policy, for the great mass of Frenchmen were horror-stricken at the blasphemous proceedings of the festivals in honor of Reason. Robespierre still followed good policy when, with the aid of the Dantonists, he made use of the journals to

fix all the atrocities of the Terror and the inefficiency of the generals in the Vendée upon Hébert.[1] Yet it was not until all powers, including the Commune, had been subjected to the two committees, and the Committee of Public Safety had, in January, 1794, won over the proletariat of Paris by a law condemning the property of suspects to be sold for the benefit of the poor, that with the Committee he dared to attack its opponents openly. Carrier, the Commune's creature, was recalled from Nantes; another of Hébert's friends on mission was recalled for having spoken ill of Couthon; the revolutionary *sans-culotte* army, the chief support of the Commune, was dispersed throughout the country; and on March 4th one of the Hébertists was arrested. His friends immediately planned an insurrection, but that power which had been theirs as late as the *coup d'état* of June 2d had now disappeared before that of the great Committee. Anarchic patriotism at last had found its master. On March 13th, Hébert and a number of his friends were arrested, and eleven days later were guillotined, amid the exultation of the masses themselves.

After this destruction of the party of brutality, there was left the single question, Did the successes of the Republic warrant a moderation of the Terror as a basis of orderly government? Danton, who as much as any one man had been the originator of the absolutism of the Committee of Public Safety, believed the time for severity had all but passed, and, as has appeared, with the aid of Robespierre and Camille Desmoulins, had

[1] Robespierre himself corrected proofs of the first numbers of Desmoulins' new journal, *Le vieux Cordelier*, in which "moderation" and hostility to Hébert were eloquently urged.

taken the preliminary steps toward changing public opinion. His policy had aroused the hopes of the better class of citizens, and the execution of the Hébertists had been interpreted to mean a speedy undoing of the fearful revolutionary government. But these hopes were abortive. Unknown to Danton, the Committee of Public Safety had determined not only to maintain the Terror, but to kill him. Even while the Hébertists were in prison, Saint-Just, Robespierre's chief ally, announced to the Convention the arrest of Hérault de Séchelles, Danton's one friend on the Committee. Why Danton did not defend him we cannot say; it may have been the belief that he could not be condemned; it may be that he was overconfident as to his own influence in the state; but quite as likely is it that he did not wish to oppose the Committee. Whether, indeed, he could have saved his friend is very doubtful. Shortly after his second marriage, when the affairs of France seemed thoroughly prosperous, he had been absent for weeks from the Assembly, passing the time at his country-house in Arcis. This interval had seen the steady rise of Robespierre's influence in the Committee of Public Safety, as well as the complete establishment of systematized Terror by Collot-d'Herbois and Billaud-Varennes. The appearance of a reaction toward moderation was full of danger for these three men, and they determined to crush the party of Danton. That the matter was largely personal appears from the charges against Danton, as well as his contempt for the precise Robespierre[1] and his methods, however val-

[1] "Robespierre!" once Danton exclaimed. "I will take him with my thumb and twirl him like a top."

uable he may have regarded them for certain stages of the Revolution. Attempts were made by Tallien to bring about a reconciliation between the two men, but without success. At the meeting arranged between them Danton is reported to have said, "We ought to crush the royalists, but not confound the innocent with the guilty." "And who," said Robespierre, "told you a single innocent man had lost his life?" "What, not one!" said Danton, ironically. Whereupon Robespierre left the room. But even then the break was not open, and Robespierre drove and ate with Danton after he had signed the order for his arrest.

The issue was clearly drawn. On the one side was a revolutionist who had favored Terror as the last means for saving the state from foreign foes,[1] but now that it had wrought its work, wished gradually to reinstate constitutional government; on the other side were a revolutionist who, having an ideal commonwealth in view, saw in the execution of its possible enemies the only method by which it could be established, and two revolutionists without either statesmanship or ideals, who hated Danton personally, and who had a well-grounded fear for their own safety in case of a reaction. Since the second group was possessed of despotic power, it was inevitable that they should win unless Danton should organize revolt. As a good patriot he was unwilling to do this. Neither would he flee. "Does a man carry his country on the soles of his shoes?" he replied to his friends, who saw

[1] "I did not intend the Revolutionary Tribunal," Danton said, when in prison, "to be a scourge of humanity, but only to prevent the renewal of the massacres of September."

his danger and urged flight. And as he waited inactive, the agents of the Committee of General Security arrested him.

His trial and that of his friends, among whom was Camille Desmoulins, was a matter of form. The charges adduced by Saint-Just were furnished him by Robespierre, and are either ridiculous or untrue.[1] It is possible that Danton's passionate defense would have cleared him if the Tribunal had not closed the hearing and obtained from the Convention the power to pass immediate sentence. Then both he and his friends were summarily condemned (April 5, 1794). "Show my head to the people," said Danton on the scaffold to Samson, the executioner; "they do not see the like every day."[2]

The fall of the Hébertists and Dantonists left Robespierre, for the first time, in control of the Committee. Even now, however, his influence was not undisputed, for Billaud-Varennes and Collot-d'Herbois were jealous of his preëminence, and the other members of the Committee were indifferent to his ideals. Yet so complete was his mastery over the Jacobins and the cowardly Swamp that for something more than three months he was virtually dictator of France.

It has sometimes been said that Robespierre is one

[1] For instance, he was charged with having been connected with Mirabeau in the latter's connection with the court, with having suggested that Robespierre's one female friend should be married, with having misappropriated funds, and with conspiracy. Of the part of Robespierre in the plot against Danton, there is indisputable evidence in his own draft of the accusations brought by Saint-Just. This is reprinted in Stephens, *Orators of the French Revolution*, II, Appendix. Hamel, *Hist. de Robespierre*, III, 454-486, attempts to relieve him of all initiative, and even responsibility, in the matter.

[2] A full account of the trial is in Beesley, *Danton*, ch. 29, as well as in the writings of Bougeart. Most complete is Robinet, *Procès des Dantonistes*. See also Wallon, *Tribunal révolutionnaire*, IV, and Mortimer-Ternaux, *La Terreur*, IX.

of the enigmas of history, but if one take his point of view, his character and career are simplicity itself. A mediocre man of narrow, pedantic honesty, a legalist in morals and a martinet in action, he was determined to found a well-ordered republic upon virtue; but with perverted vision he was a slave to consistency, a false judge of other men's motives, ready to kill any person who stood between him and the achievement of his Utopia. He would found a kingdom of heaven according to the method of the Tempter.

The process by which France was to be founded anew upon virtue, religion, and the philosophy of Rousseau was outlined in a series of the most remarkable speeches and decrees the Revolution produced. On the one hand "conspirators" were driven from points of danger by a decree compelling all ex-nobles to leave Paris and frontier towns within ten days; and on the other, the turbulent supporters of the defeated Commune, the *sans-culotte* army, were disbanded. The centralization of France was completed by removing all the ministers and distributing their duties among twelve commissions appointed by the Committee of Public Safety on the nomination of Robespierre. The irregular revolutionary committees throughout the nation were abolished, and their places supplied by a sort of police, in immediate communication with the committees of Paris. The capital itself was controlled by closing all clubs and societies except the Jacobins.[1] April 15th, "in order to strengthen the fabric of government, to rouse the servants of the state from their negligence and brutality and their indulgence to

[1] The Old Cordeliers did exist, but was of no significance.

traitors and scoundrels,"[1] all revolutionary tribunals in the departments were dissolved, and justice, like government, was centralized in Paris.

With all powers thus within its control, the Committee of Public Safety proceeded to "create those civil institutions, which are the only secure foundation of the state." In a speech of April 20th, Billaud-Varennes declared that "the state must lay hold of every human being at his birth, and direct his education with a powerful hand"; and the Convention decreed that "it is necessary to refashion completely a people one wishes to make free—to destroy its prejudices, alter its habits, limit its necessities, eradicate its vices, and purify its desires. Strong forces, therefore, must be set in motion to develop the social virtues and to repress the passions of men." May 7th Robespierre delivered a speech to the Convention upon morality and religion as the foundation of a republic.[2] In it he showed himself again the follower of Rousseau. "In the eyes of the legislator," he declared, "all that is beneficial and good in practice is truth. The idea of the Supreme Being and of the immortality of the soul is a continual recall to justice; it is therefore social and republican" In response to his desire, the Convention decreed that the French people acknowledged the existence of the Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul; that the worship most worthy of the Supreme Being is the practice of the duties of man; that the *décadis*, or revolutionary Sundays, should be devoted to festivals in honor of different days and

[1] Speech of Saint-Just on that date.

[2] The speech is printed in full in Stephens, *Orators of the French Revolution*, II, 390, seq.

virtues beneficial to man; and that there should be held a great festival in honor of the Supreme Being on June 8th. The decrees were received by the Jacobins with enthusiasm, and the Committee of Public Safety ordered that the words "To Reason," which the Hébertists had caused to be printed on the churches, should be replaced by the words "To the Supreme Being." At the same time religious liberty was granted, at least in name, to all.

While thus Robespierre was laying, as he believed, the foundation of his new commonwealth, the actual economic situation of France received most careful attention. French arms, it is true, had continued to be successful, and with the exception of England, which, under Pitt, was passing through a period of reaction against all liberalism, there was no member of the discordant Coalition that would not have welcomed peace.[1] At home, however, the Committee found complications inevitably resulting from the laws of the *maximum* and the steady issue of *assignats*. Peasants would not sell their grain, shopkeepers retired from business, the country towns diverted the food supply of the capital. Yet it did what it could; the amount of meat one could purchase was limited by law, certain exceptions were made in the application of the *maximum*, and a beginning was made of refunding the national debt bequeathed the Republic by the monarchy.[2] Nature assisted these efforts with an unusual harvest, while, despite the blockade, American vessels exchanged grain for wine

[1] See Von Sybel, *French Revolution*, III, 439–478; Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, IV, liv. i, ch. 3, esp. 91–101.

[2] See Vuhrer, *Histoire de la Dette publique*, I, ch. 13. In capitalizing the annuities at five per cent, the Convention was obviously reducing them, but it characteristically left those of aged people unchanged.

and articles of manufacture, and Switzerland, which maintained neutrality, supplied the country constantly with cattle and horses.

On June 8, 1794, the Festival of the Supreme Being was celebrated, Robespierre being the president of the day. The Convention marched in solemn procession to the Garden of the Tuileries, Robespierre at the head, dressed in his very best, and carrying, like all the deputies, flowers and stalks of grain. There an amphitheater had been erected under the direction of David, the celebrated painter, and in it Robespierre set fire to three colossal figures, symbolizing Atheism, Discord, and Selfishness; and from their ashes rose the figure of Wisdom. Then, after a speech by Robespierre, the Convention marched to the Champs de Mars, where a great crowd solemnly swore allegiance to the Republic and homage to the Supreme Being.

How genuine all this sudden piety of the Parisians may have been each will determine for himself, but there can be no doubt as to the sincerity of Robespierre. Yet his sincerity did not give him wisdom. Had he been a really great man, he might have forestalled Bonaparte, but as it was he remained a slave to the spirit of the Terror, and could think of no agent of enforcing his plans except the guillotine. Had not Rousseau excluded atheists from pity? That he planned to maintain the Terror indefinitely, or even at all after his opponents had been removed, is improbable. We have it on good authority that after he had removed the factions he was forced to fight, he meant to return to a system of order and moderation.[1] But

[1] Napoleon's quotation of the words of Cambacérès.

even with this concession, his method can only be condemned. On the 22d of Prairial (June 8th), the very day of the Festival of the Supreme Being, he caused Couthon to propose to the Convention the most terrible law ever put into force among civilized peoples. The Revolutionary Tribunal was to be divided into four sections, one to sit every day; it was to punish with death all "enemies of the people," and the provisions of the law made this phrase include almost every conceivable wrongdoer or suspect. The two committees, the Convention, the deputies on mission, and Fouquier-Tinville, the public accuser, could bring persons before the Tribunal. If the prosecution could adduce either material or moral proofs, no witnesses were to be examined; and no counsel was allowed the accused.[1]

It was with difficulty that this hideous and unnecessary law was passed. Even in the Committee itself there was opposition, Robespierre and his two friends being opposed by Billaud-Varennes, Collot-d'Herbois, and Carnot. His constant insistence upon morality and religion became a subject of ridicule.[2] His vague suggestions as to the need of still further purification of the Convention aroused the fears of men like Tallien and Barras, who knew well that their careers as deputies on mission would not bear careful scrutiny from the point of view of either terroism, honesty, or morality.[3] In the Committee he could count certainly

[1] The results of this law are to be seen in the fact that in the seven weeks it was in operation, 1,376 persons were guillotined in Paris.

[2] "You begin to bore me with your Supreme Being," said Billaud-Varennes.

[3] Robespierre fell into a serious mistake when he refused to exempt members of the Convention from the law of the 22d Prairial, and at the same time refused to name the members he would attack. Every member of the Convention feared for himself.

on only two supporters, the fanatical young Saint-Just and the paralytic Couthon. In the Convention men were already turning against him, remarking his pride in the Festival of the Supreme Being. The people, too, although they dared not attack him, were evidently hating the new régime, in which patriotic virtues were to be chosen as a less evil than death; and among the proletariat, whom he sought to benefit, but who now, as well as the wealthy, were being drawn into the net set for suspects by the terrible law of Prairial, there was a suspicious lack of enthusiasm with occasional outbursts of pity.

All this hostility had opportunity to develop, for toward the end of June Robespierre withdrew from the Committee and went into retirement, according to his apologists because of his despair at the growing influence of unscrupulous men like Barras, Tallien, and Billaud-Varennes, none of whom shared his ideals for a morally regenerate France.[1] Whatever truth there may be in this supposition—and improbable as it appears, it is not absolutely impossible—during his weeks of absence a conspiracy was formed against him and his two friends in the Committee, under the lead of Barras, Tallien, and Billaud-Varennes. The Committee of Public Safety was thus divided, but the Jacobins and the newly reorganized Commune were wholly with Robespierre. Had he appealed to the mob upon his return to Paris, he might have saved himself; but this, despite the entreaties of his friends, he would not do. Thoroughly alive to his danger, however, on July 26th he attempted to make the Convention pass a decree

[1] Some writers think it was for the purpose of courting a young woman.

against his enemies, but was met by an open attack. He lost his self-control, and left the Convention. Even then he might have crushed his opponents by an appeal to insurrection, but this he still refused to make. On the 9th Thermidor (July 27th) he again appeared in the Convention, and attempted to speak, but was silenced with shouts of "Down with the tyrant!"[1] His strength and voice failed him. "The blood of Danton chokes him!" shouted one of the conspirators. In desperation the Convention voted to arrest him, his brother, Saint-Just, Couthon, and Le Bas. "Liberty triumphs!" shouted Billaud-Varennes. "The Republic is dead," retorted Robespierre, "and rascals triumph!" And the one saying was as true as the other.

In the mean time Robespierre's supporters in the Commune had made ready the military forces of the capital for an insurrection in his defense. He and the other Terrorists were released from prison, and the troops of the Commune surrounded the Convention. It was then that as a last resort the Convention outlawed Robespierre, his friends, and the Commune.

The crisis came during the night of July 27th. The city troops filled the great square of the Town Hall, and had the sections but risen, Robespierre's power would have been supreme. But the National Guards would not join readily in the insurrection, and Robespierre himself refused to sanction a popular uprising. "Then," said Couthon, "nothing remains for us but to die." "You have said it," replied Robespierre.

[1] In a speech on July 22d, Saint-Just had distinctly said that a dictatorship on the part of Robespierre was necessary.

The crowd dispersed, and the troops of the Convention surrounded the city hall. Then, too late, Robespierre relented. The call to arms was given him for signature. He had written "Ro—" when one of the soldiers of the Convention burst into the room and shot him in the jaw.[1] Two of his friends leaped from the windows, one shot himself, Couthon tried to stab himself. All were arrested.[2]

In the building of the Archives of Paris there is a table taken during the Revolution from the Tuileries for use in the City Hall. Upon this table the wretched Robespierre lay for hours, exposed to every insult, but uttering no word, waiting his death. On the evening of the 10th Thermidor (July 28th) he and twenty-one of his friends were hurried without trial as outlaws to the guillotine. Tradition has preserved the words of an unknown old man, who, as Robespierre was stretched out upon the plank of the guillotine, shouted: "Yes, Robespierre; there is a Supreme Being."[3]

And with the fall of that shattered head all France breathed freer. For if the dream of a republic founded upon morality and religion had passed, so also (as it proved) had passed the Terror.

[1] The fac-simile of this document, with the drops of blood after the two letters, is given in the *Mémoirs* of Barras. It should be added that there have been efforts made to prove that Robespierre shot himself in an attempt at suicide.

[2] The most satisfactory account of the 9th and 10th of Thermidor is in Wallon, *Tribunal révolutionnaire*, V, 199-255. See also Blanc, *La Révolution française*, XI, ch. 2; Hericault, *La Revolution de Thermidor;* Quinet, *La Révolution française*, bk. xix.

[3] There is also an alleged epitaph for Robespierre:

*Passant, qui que tu sois, ne pleure pas mon sort:*
*Si je vivais, tu serais mort.*

# CHAPTER XIX

## THE RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT[1]

I. The Reaction from the Terror: 1. Parties after Thermidor; 2. The Legislative Reaction. II. Problems before the Victors: 1. The Economic Crisis; 2. Peace with Foreign Nations. III. The Fall of the Mountain: 1. Anti-Jacobinism; 2. The Revolts of 1st Prairial. IV. The Crushing of Royalist Rebellion: 1. "The White Terror"; 2. The Quiberon Expedition. V. The Constitution of 1795: 1. Its Provisions; 2. The Two Decrees; 3. The 13th Vendémiaire. VI. The Return to Constitutional Government: 1. Last Struggles of the Jacobin Element; 2. The Inauguration of the Directory and Councils. VII. Tendency toward Militarism at the End of the Revolution.

After the fall of Robespierre the Revolution began to retrace its course, both as regards the spirit and the legislation of the Convention. Three parties came to be clearly distinguished—the still considerable group of the Mountain; the Thermidorians,[2] most of whom had been Dantonists; and the great body of the Swamp or Center,[3] now daring to become Moderates. In the overthrow of Robespierre the Thermidorians and the Moderates had been aided by the enemies of the "dictator" on the Committee of Public Safety, and

[1] In general, see Von Sybel, *French Revolution*, IV, bk. xii; Carlyle, *French Revolution*, III, bk. vii; Taine, *French Revolution*, III, bk. ix; Thiers, *French Revolution*, III, 234-245; Mignet, *French Revolution*, chs. 10, 11. See also the novels of Gras, *The White Terror*, and Erckmann-Chatrian, *Citizen Bonaparte*.

[2] This term is used to indicate those who like Barras and Tallien had been most active on the 9th and 10th of Thermidor.

[3] The spirit of this body during the Terror had been despicably cowardly. "What did you do during those years?" Siéyès was once asked. "I lived," was the reply.

for a few weeks this anomalous partnership was maintained. In consequence legislation began to retrace its course. Wholesale execution of suspects ceased, and although trials and condemnations continued for several months, the terrible law of the 22d Prairial, denying counsel to prisoners brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal, was repealed, and the number of executions was small.[1] The irresponsible rule of the Committee of Public Safety was ended by the provision that one-fourth of its members should be renewed every month, and at least one month should pass before a member was reëlected. This reversion to the decentralized government of the early years of the Revolution is further seen in the fact that most of the powers exercised by the Committee of Public Safety were distributed between sixteen independent and coördinate committees. To weaken radicalism, the revolutionary committees which had played so large a rôle in the Terror throughout the departments were reduced to one in each district and to one meeting each *décade*. A *bourgeois* reaction from the socialistic methods of the Terror showed itself in the decree that *sans-culottes* were no longer to be paid for attendance upon the assemblies of the sections. Less attention also was paid to feeding the proletariat. The Revolutionary Tribunal was reorganized, with a jury and a proper provision for the defense of the accused, while the former public prosecutor, Fouquier-Tinville, was arrested, tried, and after some months, together

[1] From July 31st to September 16th, of 290 accused, only 14 were condemned; from September 17th to October 21st, of 312 accused, 24 were condemned; the next month only 5 out of 236, and at last, January 20 to February 18, 1795 (Pluviose, year III), of 30 accused, none were condemned.

with fifteen of his former jurors, was executed. The Commune of Paris was replaced by two commissions, and the Jacobin Club was ordered to purge itself of the friends of Robespierre, to cease corresponding with other societies in its own name, and at last (November 12, 1794) was suppressed and its hall closed. The restriction upon the freedom of the press was, at least in large part, removed: amnesty was offered the Vendeans who should lay down their arms; the secrecy of letters was declared inviolable; the observance of the Catholic faith was again sanctioned, and the worst elements of the law of the *maximum* were repealed. In the meantime the prisons were emptied of all those who had been illegally arrested. The agents of the Terror were not at once attacked, but as the reaction developed the eighty-three outlaws of the Commune, Fouquier-Tinville and his jurors, and Carrier, author of the horrors at Nantes, were tried and executed. Those members of the Convention who, in October, 1793, had dared to protest against the *coup d'état* of May 31-June 2, were reinstated, and at last the wave of anti-Terror legislation reached the proscribed Girondins themselves, and such of them as still survived were readmitted into the Convention, there to join the leaders of the new movement toward constitutional government.[1]

It was inevitable that such a reversal of a previously unquestioned policy should sometimes go to excess. On the one side the hitherto oppressed *bourgeois* and "aristocrats" suddenly began to play the master.

[1] On the Thermidorian legislation, see Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, IV, 122–132.

The sections of Paris purified their assemblies of *sans-culottes*, and their young men — the *jeunesse dorée*, or "Gilded Youth,"—armed themselves with clubs, organized in bands, and patrolled the city, abusing the Jacobins. Revolutionary songs were tabooed. Styles of clothing changed, and with a levity Robespierre could not efface, men and women dressed their hair as had those prepared for the guillotine,[1] and to cap the climax, gave balls *à la victime*, to which no one was invited who had not lost a relative during the Terror.

It is not strange that such enthusiasm should attract many persons of royalist sympathies, and that there should appear no small prospect that moderation might give way to a royalist reaction. Here was cause enough for a struggle between the Mountain and the Moderates. The Convention itself endeavored to forestall the suspicion of royalist sympathies, but the Mountain not only chafed under the new necessity of acting in self-defense, but suspected its opponents of hostility to the Republic. Nor is its suspicion difficult to understand. So far as the Terror went, the Convention had been quite as guilty as it, and the Thermidorian party was by no means incorruptible, for many of its members were already growing rich in ways that would hardly bear close scrutiny.[2] The royalist color given the Thermidorian reaction, the Mountain rightly judged, did not express a genuinely national feeling. The people of France as a whole

[1] That is, the men cut theirs short or turned it up behind, and the women plaited theirs and fastened it with combs high on the top of their heads. It is interesting to observe how so many conventionalities of fashion, like these and long trousers, date from this period.

[2] Gouverneur Morris seems to have suspected the Terrorists of the same wrongdoing as early as August, 1793. See Morris, *Diary and Letters of Gouverneur Morris*, II, 51.

wanted nothing but a republic. Mallet du Pan in November, 1794, expressed the matter clearly, "The mass of people has begun to forget it ever had a king." In the Vendée itself it began to be apparent that if the priests were allowed to minister to the peasants, the causes of the revolt would utterly disappear.

Nor were these the Mountain's only grounds of complaint. The undoing of the centralized government of the Committee of Public Safety had brought France into the most serious economic embarrassment. The enforcement of the *maximum* had been abandoned, with the immediate result of encouraging stock jobbing and every sort of speculation. The *assignats* were depreciating with frightful rapidity, and the price of food rose enormously.[1] With a million men withdrawn from agriculture, famine was actually at the door of nearly every town in the nation. From all over France there went up the cry of hunger. The crops in many of the departments failed. Around Dieppe the entire population of villages ate herbs and bran. In Picardy men and women scoured the woods for mushrooms and berries. In the towns the misery was more intense The poor were given a daily allowance of grain, but this was sometimes as small as three ounces of wheat for each person every eight days. Even in cities like Amiens or Troyes the poor were allowed only a half-pound of flour each day. And this misery, so appalling to men who, though but demagogues, had championed the masses, existed notwithstanding the unparalleled agrarian revolution

[1] In July, 1795, a pound of meat was worth 36 francs. Bread was selling in January, 1796, at 50 francs a pound and meat at 60.

which had enabled the peasants to buy up the lands of church and nobles confiscated by the state. It would have been strange indeed if the Mountain had not seen in it an argument against the moderate régime.

But probably the most fundamental difference between the various parties of the Convention, now that the Terror was outgrown, concerned the establishment of peace with Europe, of giving France a constitution, and thus of closing the Revolution.

The campaign of 1794 had been wonderfully successful for the Republic. It was not only that the raw levies had become veterans, and that the unrestricted opportunity for promotion had brought to the front able generals; the leader of the allied forces had displayed amazing stupidity, and the huge Coalition was giving unmistakable signs of approaching dissolution. In January, 1795, Holland was conquered,[1] and a few weeks later erected into a republic, which (May 16th) formed an alliance with France. This success of the French, as well as its own financial straits, its jealousy of Austria, and its interest in the partition of Poland, always a hindrance to war with France, led Prussia to enter upon negotiations for peace (January 22, 1795). On April 14th the Peace of Basle was definitively ratified by the Convention.[2] By it the Republic was assured the possession of the Prussian territory on the left of the Rhine until a general peace, and northern Germany was made neutral. By secret clauses France was ceded all its conquests

[1] It was in this campaign that (January 20th) a force of French cavalry captured a Dutch fleet which had been frozen fast in the ice.

[2] On the diplomatic process, see Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, IV. bk. i, ch. 5, and bk. ii; Von Sybel, *French Revolution*, bk. xi.

on the left bank of the Rhine upon condition of compensating Prussia; for which act means were to be gained by secularizing the church property within the conquered territory. In July Spain also made peace, ceding France Spanish San Domingo in return for all places taken by the French.

Advantageous to the Republic as was the Peace of Basle, the months devoted to the necessary negotiations had shown the deep-seated hostility of the Mountain to any measure looking toward the increased power of the Moderates. Both the Thermidorians and the Mountain knew that their supremacy was possible only as long as war continued, and it was inevitable that there should again arise a struggle between the Mountain and the Moderates for the mastery of the Republic. But now the issue was to be reversed. Moderation, not Terror, was to be the order of the day. None the less, Jacobinism died hard. The Mountain had been deprived of Robespierre; it had been forced to see Dantonists and Girondins return to the Convention; it had been unable to punish the belligerent Gilded Youth, even when they threw the body of Marat into the sewer; it had seen its clubs suppressed, and one of its most outspoken members in the Convention imprisoned for several days for abusive speech; it had been unable to prevent the treaties of peace. The readmission of the Girondins was an explicit condemnation of all its actions since June 2, 1793, and none of its members could hope to escape punishment. As first fruits of this future, Collot-d'Herbois, Billaud-Varennes, Barère, and Vadier

were all arrested, brought to trial, and sentenced to transportation.

Unaccustomed to such defeats, the Mountain turned again to the masses of Paris, and organized insurrection. With utter disregard of its former suspension of constitutional government, its war-cry was "Bread and the Constitution of 1793!" Again crowds of frenzied women tried to intimidate the legislators, and on April 1, 1795 (12th Germinal, year III), a mob forced its way into the Convention. For four hours it howled and threatened violence, until at last the wealthier sections of Paris armed themselves, and under the direction of General Pichegru, came to the relief of the Convention. Then the mob fled. As a result of this riot several members of the Mountain were arrested on the explicit charge of having been Terrorists, and a little later the occurrence or danger of riots in Amiens, Rouen, Marseilles, and Toulon led to the arrest of still others of its members.

The struggle at last resolved itself to this: Could the Convention draw up a constitution that should incorporate the new moderatism and the experience of the six years of revolution, or would the Jacobins be able to intimidate it into enforcing the radically democratic Constitution of 1793?

The issue was joined May 20, 1795 (1st Prairial). The Jacobins, after careful preparation, again summoned the people to insurrection, declared the end of the revolutionary epoch, the dismissal and arrest of the members of the existing government, the establishment of the Constitution of 1793, and summoned

a new Assembly to meet within a month. A desperate mob again filled the Convention Hall. So unexpected was the uprising that the Convention was totally unprepared; but it dared oppose its foes even after they had killed the deputy Féraud. Boissy d'Anglas, the president of the day, respectfully saluted the bleeding head of his colleague, but though pikes were at his breast, refused to put the motions demanded by the mob. The Mountain thereupon passed them all, and France was apparently again in the hands of the Jacobins. But it was only for a few hours. Again the wealthier sections armed, and their troops with fixed bayonets cleared the hall of its murderous invaders. Order was restored, the votes were annulled, and fourteen deputies who had aided the rioters were arrested. The next day an attempt was made to renew the disorder, but it proved unsuccessful. Six members of the Mountain who had been leaders of the uprising were arrested, brought before a military commission, and condemned to death. They all stabbed themselves with the same dagger, three fatally. The others were promptly guillotined. Then, in order to prevent a repetition of such disturbances, the Convention authorized General Menou to use troops in disarming the Faubourg Saint Antoine. Not content with this drastic measure, it put him in command of a permanent guard for itself.

While thus the Convention was crushing that aggressive minority which had been so long its master, it was forced also to repress royalist uprisings and conspiracies. The middle course between Jacobinism and royalist reaction was not easy to hold, and with

the executive powers divided among sixteen committees strong government was difficult. Every day pointed to the army as the one certain means of maintaining order. How insufficient was ordinary municipal government in dealing with violence, appeared in the "White Terror," or anti-Jacobin violence, that swept over the Republic, and particularly southern France. The vengeance of the French middle class is always as hideous as the uprising of the proletariat, and in 1795 the royalists, the "aristocrats," and the *bourgeois* inflicted on the Jacobins the same horrors they had themselves suffered at the hands of the *sans-culottes*. Anti-Jacobin clubs were formed with the names of "Companies of Jehu," "Companies of the Sun," and the massacres of September, 1792, were repeated, with characters reversed. In Marseilles several hundred former Terrorists had been arrested and lodged in prison. On June 5, 1795, many of them were massacred,[1] and then the prison was set on fire, many of the prisoners being burnt alive. Several of the murderers were arrested, but released without even so much as a trial. In Tarascon Jacobins were thrown from the top of a tower upon the rocks of the river-bank; in Lyons, Avignon, in fact in twenty departments, similar acts of vengeance were perpetrated.

Such disorders were interpreted by royalists and *émigrés* to indicate a desire on the part of France for a counter-revolution against the Republic. Not only did Bourbon cliques begin to reassert themselves, but in the Vendée the *émigrés* attempted civil war.

[1] The total number of those butchered was about 200.

The efforts of the Convention to pacify either Brittany or the Vendée had not been successful, and discontent was growing rapidly among their peasantry. A heroic Vendean, Charette, who had maintained a small royalist army, was promised aid by England and the brothers of Louis XVI. An expedition composed of about 6,000 men, including French prisoners of war and 1,500 *émigrés*, was fitted out in England, and landed on a sandy point in Quiberon Bay, prepared to advance upon France. Had the Bourbon princes promised the nation the reforms accomplished by the Constituent Assembly, it is not impossible that they might have found themselves at the head of a formidable uprising; but they had not learned the lessons later to be taught by the Napoleonic era, and they denounced the Constitutionalists as disguised traitors, more worthy of the rack and gallows than the Jacobins. At the same time that they thus alienated the liberal party, their agents succeeded in antagonizing the leaders of the Vendée, and through jealousy of the English and their share in the expedition, in preventing any royalist movements in Brittany. The leaders of the expedition itself could not act in harmony, and blunders were made at every step. Under these conditions the Quiberon invasion could be nothing but a fiasco. The republican forces under General Hoche swept all before them, and shut up the entire invading army, as well as large numbers of Vendean peasants, in an indefensible fort erected on the sandy point. When this was taken by a night attack, the *émigrés*, with the Vendean women and children, retreated to the extreme end of the point, and there attempted to embark in

the English ships. But again their effort failed, and the wretched survivors were forced to surrender. The women and children were released, but a court-martial found six hundred of the prisoners guilty of treason, and they were shot.

A short time later, the Count d'Artois made a second attempt at invasion, but was too much of a coward to face the republican troops, and finally returned to England, leaving Charette to his fate.[1]

Thus relieved from royalist anarchy and royalist invasion, the Convention turned to the duty for which it had originally been summoned, the making of a constitution. Even while the *émigrés* were at Quiberon a committee, of which Boissy d'Anglas was chairman, reported the first draft of such a document, in which, after a review of the work of the Constituent Assembly and the Terror, it insisted that the legislature should consist of two chambers, and that the legislative and executive branches should be independent. These two principles were embodied in the Constitution of 1795. The legislature was to consist of two Councils, that of the Five Hundred and that of the Ancients, each to be elected by electors chosen by the people. An executive body, known as the Directory, was to be established, consisting of five members, one of whom should retire every year, to be chosen by the Ancients from a list submitted by the Council of the Five Hundred. The influence of the *bourgeoisie* was felt in the provision that all officials should be property-holders, and that, although the suffrage was

[1] He was captured and shot March 29, 1796. The Vendée was not finally pacified till August, 1796.

declared a natural right, all persons should be excluded from voting who did not pay some kind of tax. Freedom of labor, commerce, religion, and the press was established; all political clubs were prohibited; the *émigrés* were forever outlawed, and the title of confiscated lands was guaranteed to their new holders. The Directory was to have full control over military affairs and the various agents of the government. It had, however, no power of initiating measures, or of dissolving the Councils.[1] As the legislature had full control of pecuniary grants, it is obvious that a deadlock was always possible, and that it could be broken only by a *coup d'état* on the part of one or the other branches of the government.[2]

In many ways the new constitution was evidently a return to the ideas of the Constituent Convention, and in so far favored the royalist reaction.[3] The Convention, however, was farthest possible from planning a reëstablishment of the monarchy, and remembering its own history under the Terror, was determined that the government about to be established under the new constitution should abandon neither republicanism nor the Terrorist delegates to the mercy of those who had injuries to avenge. The Quiberon affair and the boldness of the royalists of Paris made

[1] When this was proposed, it was silenced by the cry, "That is the *veto*; that is monarchy!"

[2] It is worth noticing that this Constitution of 1795 was preceded by a Declaration of the Rights and *Duties* of the Man and the Citizen.

[3] It should be remembered that the royalists were of two sorts, those favoring the Old Régime and those favoring the constitutional monarchy of the Constitution of 1791. The first group included the remains of the old privileged orders, while the second embraced many of the *bourgeois*. As has already been said, the absolute royalists hated the constitutional royalists as cordially as they hated the Jacobins.

it necessary to provide for a continuance in power of those who had founded and saved the Republic. So unpopular was the Convention[1] that if the country were granted absolutely free election, it was almost certain that reactionists would be elected to both the new Councils. With considerable sagacity, therefore, the Convention turned to the constitutional proviso for the renewal of but a third of each Council, and decreed that two-thirds of the new legislature should be chosen by the electors from its own membership, and that the Convention should fill any vacancies due to the election of the same man by different departments. To intimidate the now insolent *bourgeoisie*, it was also decreed that the Constitution should be laid before the armies for acceptance. At the same time, in order to insure order at the elections, large bodies of troops were assembled near Paris.

These two decrees roused the wealthier sections of Paris to fury. If they were accepted by the people, for a year at least the Republic would be controlled by a legislature the majority of whose members had maintained the Terror. The approach of the troops added to the suspicion already aroused by the actions of the Convention, and section after section appeared before it to protest against the decrees. When their protests were unheeded, the *bourgeois* and reactionists determined to crush the Convention with the weapons of the mob. The issue became increasingly one to be determined only by military force. It was not merely a local crisis. All over France the agents of

[1] Even their official sash became an object of derision when the deputies were on the street.

the Convention were insulted and abused,[1] and the republican General Pichegru began to enter into negotiations with the Prince of Condé.

Yet, when the Constitution and the decrees were submitted to the nation, despite all the efforts of Paris, they were accepted by large majorities.[2] The announcement of this fact caused even wilder agitation in Paris, and by October 4th forty-four of the forty-eight sections of the capital were in open revolt and organizing armed resistance. In a short time an army of nearly 30,000 men of the National Guard, mostly *bourgeois*, were ready to march upon the Convention. The government, in its turn, brought in the regiments it had concentrated near the city, and prepared for actual battle. Its general, Menou, however, proved to be in sympathy with the insurgents, and was removed. Had the National Guard advanced promptly, it might have crushed the Convention, but it preferred to spend the night of October 4th (12th Vendémiaire) in shouting and torchlight processions. The Convention meanwhile remained in permanent session, and among other steps for its defense appointed Barras commander-in-chief of its forces. Barras himself, to judge from his *Memoirs*, was one of the greatest braggarts and liars of his day, but now, as at Thermidor, he was able to bring the necessary thing to pass. He had under him a force of perhaps 5,000 men, but no second in command. Imme-

[1] At Chartres the market women forced the Convention's representative to lower the price of bread and then led him around the town on an ass, they the while shouting, "*Vive le roi*."

[2] Again but a small part of the citizens voted. The Constitution was accepted, 914,000 votes to 44,000, and the decrees, 167,000 to 96,000.

diately he turned to one of his friends, Napoleon Bonaparte, a young Corsican of twenty-five, a former friend of Robespierre, then a clerk in the Topographical office, who had distinguished himself in the siege of Toulon, but who had been discharged from the army on account of his refusal to accept a transference from the artillery to the infantry. Bonaparte's professional sensitiveness had brought him to narrow circumstances, and had it not been for his brother Joseph's marriage with an heiress he would have been obliged to sell his books. Until his appointment to the Topographical office he seems to have lived a poor sort of life, and despite his numerous plans, to have grown half desperate from discouragements, but even more from the fatalism that marked his life. On August 12, 1795, he wrote his brother Joseph: "I can meet fate and destiny with courage, and unless I change I shall very soon not move out of the way when a carriage passes." Certainly he would have been counted a wild prophet who should have prophesied great things for this penniless clerk and discharged general, dependent upon a sister-in-law's bounty!

Yet destiny, as Bonaparte believed, was before and with him. He was well known to Barras, who had discovered in his face a likeness to Marat, to whom he had been warmly attached, and remembering Toulon, and in despair of finding a man equally trustworthy and energetic, he intrusted to him the protection of the Convention. Bonaparte took half an hour for calculation, and with the true adventurer's instinct accepted the command (Vendémiaire 13). Not relying merely upon infantry, but true to his pro-

fession—to the end of his days Bonaparte was a major in the artillery—he gathered all the cannon that were at hand in Paris and planted them about the building in which the Convention was assembled. In the morning the National Guard began to gather for its attack, but found itself confronted by Bonaparte's troops. For hours the two forces stood facing each other not fifty feet apart, neither willing to begin the struggle. At last, at half-past four in the afternoon, the leader of the insurrectionists gave the signal for attack. Instantly Bonaparte ordered his guns loaded with grape-shot, to be fired upon the crowd. Their execution was deadly; the members of the National Guard, crowded into the streets and quays, were cut down in great numbers. No man could stand that "whiff of grape-shot," and although they were brave, and were led by brave men, the insurrectionists after one last stand on the steps of St. Roch, broke ranks and fled to their homes. *The army had saved the government.*

For a moment there was the danger of a new reign of Jacobinism. The struggle of Vendémiaire had again brought together the Thermidorians and the survivors of the Mountain, all of whom feared the presence of new deputies, sure to be elected from their enemies. When the elections began, a week after the revolt, their fears were justified. The polls were largely attended, and not only were those members of the Convention elected who were least implicated in the Terror, but all of the new deputies were moderate, and even royalist in sympathy The Thermidorians and the Mountain declared that such a legislature

would mean nothing less than an undoing of the Republic. They determined to suspend the Constitution, prevent the meeting of the Councils, and maintain the Convention, together with a commission of five of their number as a sort of executive. But the tide of Jacobinism had ebbed. The Convention was not to be coerced, and the bare exposure of the scheme by Thibaudeau was enough to defeat it utterly. On October 26th the Convention peacefully dissolved, after having declared a general amnesty for all political offenses committed since 1791, the rebels of the 13th Vendémiaire alone being excepted.

The next day the new Councils assembled. Their first duty was to elect the 105 members who were still needed to complete the Council of the Five Hundred. In general, those chosen were unimportant persons, committed neither to the Moderates nor to the Mountain. Next, the Council of the Ancients, all of whom were required to be forty-eight years of age and married, was chosen by lot from the mass of delegates. Then came that most vital matter, the choice of the Directors. All the delegates knew that each new election would be certain to return an increasing number of anti-Terrorists. Accordingly, to insure a continuity of government, and above all, to provide against a counter-revolution in case the Councils should become royalist—a condition that was actually to arise—the Council of the Five Hundred, by carefully selecting its list of candidates, brought about the election of five Directors, each of whom had voted for the death of Louis XVI.

Thus assured of at least a temporary continuance

of the republican régime, France, after a revolutionary interregnum of three years, began again to live under a constitution. It was not yet free from dangers. Within were a people oppressed by hunger, poverty, and disorder; a religious freedom that was hardly more than a name; a national debt already of appalling size; a hopelessly depreciated currency, and a commerce all but destroyed; a growing reaction toward constitutional monarchy, and in the Vendée the remains of actual civil war. Without were a war against England and Austria, and a swarm of *émigrés* plotting invasion and vengeance. But with these dangers there were also resources. The struggle for rights had not been in vain. France was not only far better unified and organized than in 1789, it was more obedient to law and more intelligently interested in government. The peasants were already beginning to develop their newly acquired lands; the peace with Prussia and Spain, as well as the alliance with Holland, would soon revive commerce; the armies on the frontiers were the pledge of new victories.

With the armies, indeed, lay the future of the nation. As absolutism had given way to constitutional monarchy, and constitutional monarchy had been followed by a republic at once revolutionary and warring, so the Republic by its victories was about to become something still different. What its future should be the Convention itself had irrevocably fixed by its decision that war was to continue until Europe recognized the Rhine as the boundary of the Republic. For out from this war was to come, directly and rapidly, the military empire of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Strictly speaking, however, the Empire formed no stage of the Revolution. To trace its rise would be to watch the development of no new popular spirit, such as that which led to the calling of the States General and the destruction of the Old Régime. It would rather be to record a succession of changes in the form of government accomplished with the assent, but not the assistance of the nation. A *coup d'état* is not a revolution, and the rise of Bonaparte was due to the army, and not to a new idealism. Yet he was none the less a legitimate product of the Revolution, and without him the work of the six years we have described would very largely have disappeared. His marvelous success was something more than that of a mere adventurer or soldier. Wherever his influence was felt the spirit of the Revolution was also felt. That neither he nor the Revolution gave continental Europe the constitutional liberty of America may well be admitted; but wherever his influence extended, feudal privileges, absolute monarchy, abuses of many sorts, vanished, and in their places came, though in varying degree, political equality, and constitutional government. And in these blessings enjoyed so generally by western Europe, as well as in the acknowledged right of every man to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, we must see the inestimable blood-bought results of the years 1789-1795. So true is it that the French Revolution by perpetuating the results of a century's political and intellectual evolution began a new epoch in European politics and thought.

## CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

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| 1789 | May | 5. | Opening of the States Generals. |
| | June | 17. | The Third Estate constitute, itself the Nationa Assembly. |
| | June | 20. | The Oath of the Tennis Court. |
| | June | 23. | The Royal Session. |
| | June | 27. | The union of the three orders in the CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. |
| | July | 2. | Attempted *coup d'état* of the court. |
| | July | 14. | Fall of the Bastille. |
| | Aug. | 4. | End of the feudal system. |
| | Oct. | 5, 6. | The King brought to Paris. |
| 1790 | June | 19. | Abolition of nobiiity. |
| | July | 14. | Festival of the Confederation. |
| | Sept. | 29. | Creation of 80,000,000 *assignats*. |
| 1791 | April | 2. | Death of Mirabeau. |
| | June | 21-25. | The flight to Varennes. |
| | July | 6. | Appeal by Emperor Leopold to sovereigns of Europe in behalf of Louis. |
| | July | 17. | The Massacre of the Champs de Mars. |
| | July | 25. | Treaty between Prussia and Austria against France. |
| | Aug. | 27. | Treaty of Pilnitz. |
| | Sept. | 13. | Constitution accepted by Louis. |
| | Oct. | 1. | First sitting of the NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. |
| | Oct. | 30. | Massacres at Avignon. |
| | Nov. | 17. | Pétion the Girondin elected mayor of Paris. |
| 1792 | Feb. | 7. | Treaty between Prussia and Austria to quell the disturbances in France. |
| | Mch. | 30. | Property of emigrants confiscated. |
| | April | 20. | Declaration of war against Austria. |

June 8. Louis vetoes bill providing for military camp at Paris.
June 12, 13. Girondin ministry dismissed.
June 20. The mob at the Tuileries.
June 26. First Coalition formed against France.
July 11. The country decreed to be in danger.
Aug. 10. The sack of the Tuileries.
Aug. 11. Louis suspended.
Aug. 13. The royal family imprisoned in the Temple.
Sept. 2-6. Massacres in the prisons at Paris.
Sept. 20. "Cannonade at Valmy."
Sept. 21. End of the Legislative Assembly; opening of the
NATIONAL CONVENTION.
Declaration of the Republic.
Sept. 22. Beginning of the Republican calendar.
Nov. 19 The Convention promises aid to all nations desiring to overthrow their kings.

1793 Jan. 15-20. Trial and execution of Louis XVI.
Feb. 1. The Convention declares war against England and Holland.
Mch. 7. War declared against Spain.
Mch. 9. The great Coalition formed against France.
Mch. 10, 11. Institution of the Revolutionary Tribunal.
Mch. 11. Rebellion of the Vendée.
Mch. 25. Institution of the Committee of Public Safety.
April 1. Defection of Dumouriez.
May 4. First law of the *Maximum*.
May 30. / June 2. } Downfall of the Girondins.
June 8. French ports blockaded.
July 13. Marat assassinated.
Aug. 10. Constitution of 1793 accepted (but never enforced).
Aug. 23. The levy *en masse*.
Sept. 17. Law against "Suspects."
Oct. 10. The government declared revolutionary till a peace,

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| | Oct. | 16. | Execution of Marie Antoinette. |
| | Oct. | 31. | Execution of the Girondins. |
| | Nov. | 10. | Institution of the "Worship of Reason." |
| | Dec. | 4. | Organization of the revolutionary government. |
| 1794 | Jan. | 21. | Terror at its height in Nantes. |
| | Feb. | 4. | Slavery abolished in French colonies. |
| | Mch. | 24. | Execution of the Hébertists. |
| | Apr. | 5. | Execution of Danton and the Dantonists. The supremacy of Robespierre. |
| | June | 8. | Festival of the Supreme Being. Law forbidding counsel to persons brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal. |
| | July | 26-28. | Fall and execution of Robespierre. |
| | Aug. | 12. | The Revolutionary Tribunal reorganized. |
| | Aug. | 24. | Powers of the Committee of Public Safety lessened. |
| | Oct. | 12. | Clubs forbidden to correspond in their own names. |
| | Nov. | 12. | The Jacobin Club suspended. |
| | Dec. | 2. | Amnesty offered the Vendée. |
| | Dec. | 8. | Girondins readmitted to the Convention. |
| | Dec. | 24. | The Maximum repealed. |
| 1795 | Jan. | 19. | Conquest of Holland. |
| | April | 5. | Treaty of peace with Prussia. |
| | April | 24. | "The White Terror." |
| | May | 1. | The mob attacks the Convention. |
| | May | 30. | The Catholic religion reinstated. |
| | June | 8. | Death of Louis XVII. |
| | June | 17. | Fall of the Mountain. |
| | July | 21. | *Émigrés* surrender at Quiberon. |
| | July | 22. | Treaty of peace with Spain. |
| | Aug. | 22. | The Constitution of the Year III adopted. |
| | Oct. | 1. | All conquered countries on left of the Rhine incorporated in France. |
| | Oct. | 5. | Insurrection of Vendémiaire 13. |
| | Oct. | 26. | End of the Convention. |
| | Oct. | 28. | France again under a Constitution. |

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